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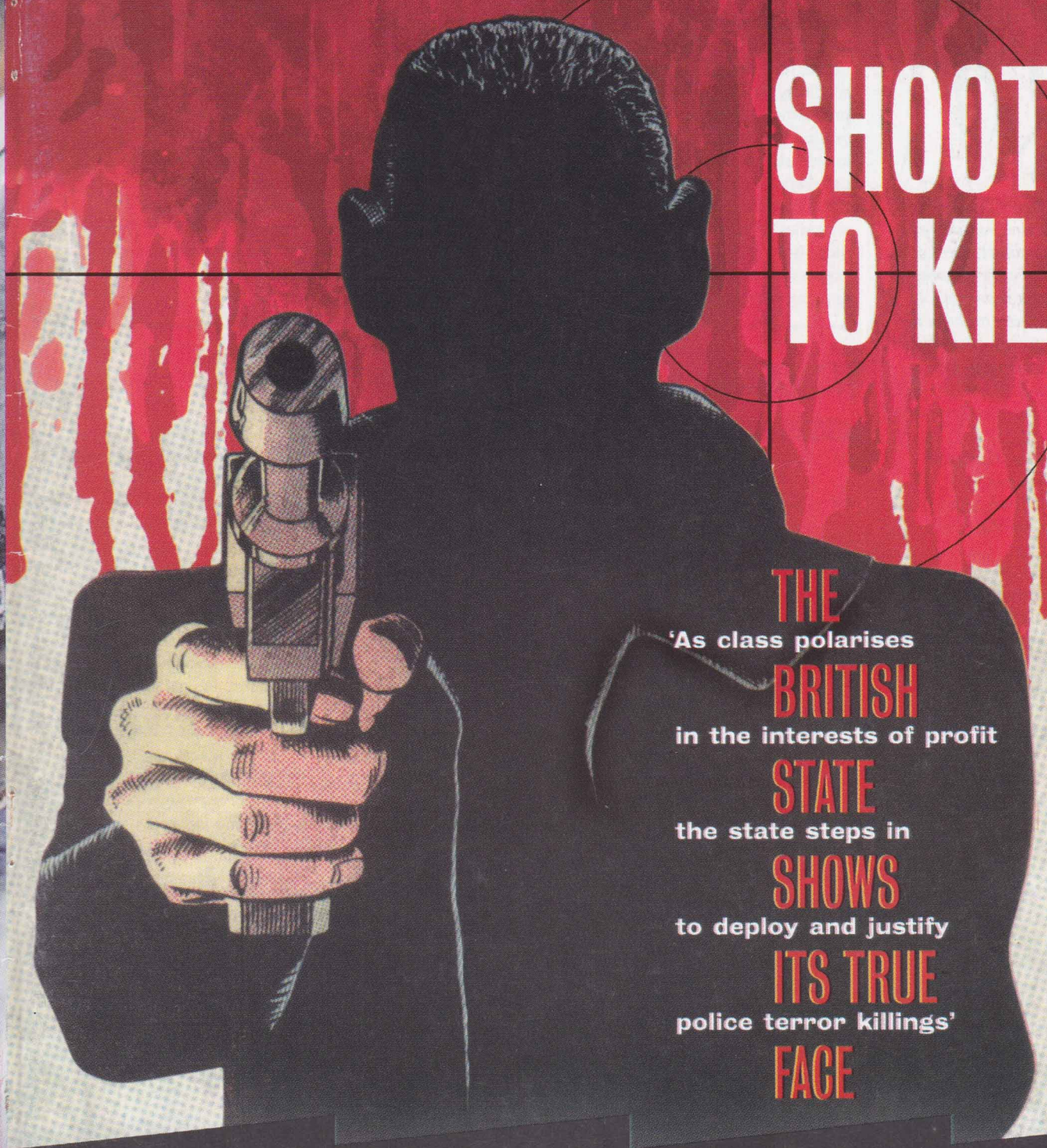
Black Flag

FOR ANARCHIST RESISTANCE



SHOOTING TO KILL!

THE
'As class polarises
BRITISH
in the interests of profit
STATE
the state steps in
SHOWS
to deploy and justify
ITS TRUE
police terror killings'
FACE

inside → N30 & Seattle – eyewitness reports | technology | health & wealth | democracy

Black Flag

For a social system based on mutual aid and voluntary co-operation; against state control and all forms of government and economic repression. To establish a share in the general prosperity for all – the breaking down of racial, religious, national and sex barriers – and to fight for the life of one world.

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editorial

"CAPITALISM? NO THANKS! WE WILL BURN YOUR FUCKING BANKS!" So chanted a group of black-clad anarchists in Seattle. A slogan of immense theoretical power and clarity, it sums up well the promise and power of anarchism! We have the politics to understand the world and, more importantly, the tactics (direct action), the ideas (a free and libertarian socialism) and ideals (liberty, equality, solidarity) to change the world for the better. Needless to say, after the event, the hordes of self-proclaimed vanguards published articles trying to 'educate' us poor, thick, anarchists of the errors of our (petty-bourgeois/lumpen proletariat) ways. Of course it never enters their minds that we are anarchists not because we have never heard of Marxist-Leninism. We are anarchists because we understand it. We reject the ideas of vanguardism and embrace the lessons learned by people actually active in the class struggle. Kropotkin was right, anarchism "originated in everyday struggles" and draws its ideas and ideals from those struggles, such as those in Seattle and the organising and organisations that preceded it. That is why Seattle is so important – it was an expression of the class struggle which inspires and informs anarchism and from this struggle anarchist ideas will grow. Direct action gets results, yet again!

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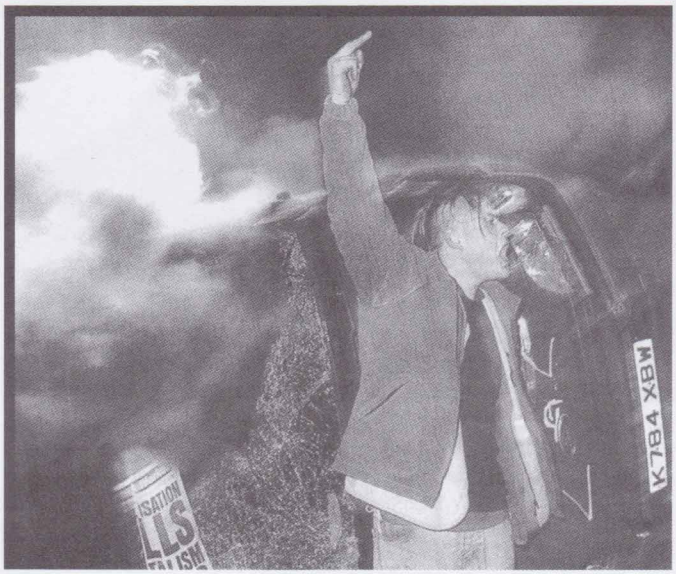
N30 Reclaiming the Railways

As martial law was imposed on the streets of Seattle, London hosted its own mini-riot at Euston Station



On 30 November 1999, Reclaim the Streets and the Strike Support Group organised a 1000+ strong demo called 'Reclaim the Railways' outside Euston Station, with the support of the London Transport Regional Council of the RMT (Tube Workers) and the Campaign Against Tube Privatisation.

Speakers at the rally included railworkers campaigning for rail safety and against privatisation, anti-WTO activists and Zapatista supporters. The speakers presented a refreshing anti-capitalist message, urging direct action rather than following parties or voting for new politicians. Unlike the left, who have retarded the issue politically by calling for renationalisation, RTS urged workers' self-management as the only alternative to privatisation.

In addition to the anarchist solution to privatisation, the demo also successfully linked New Labour's Thatcherite policies to the on-going global assault on our class. As one of the RTS leaflets put it: "The most blatant example of market madness in London is the privatisation of the Tube. Consequently, railways are the focus of the events here. Join us to say No! to privatisation. No! to another century of capitalism. No! to another century of alienated work, poverty, wars and ecological destruction – and Yes! to a new world based on real human community, a society based on our needs and desires not their profits!"

Reclaim the Streets also stressed the importance of doing it ourselves and not relying on politicians or parties. It's a shame they did not use the word anarchist (unlike socialist and communist), but the libertarian message of self-help, direct action and solidarity came through and that is what really counts.

The only real solution is a new society based on human needs, not profit. They also linked the need to transform the world with direct action of workers, "The only practical solution is for us to start talking to our fellow commuters and workers, to start coming together to build a new world. That is what railworkers begin to do when they go on strike. Of course, the media say strikes cause commuter misery and damage to the economy. But what is the economy about? It is about working hard just to survive, while making profits for others to live at our expense. The economy is human misery. By striking, workers reduce the misery!"

Some comrades also helped hammer home the importance of autonomous self-organisation with a leaflet warning people of the parasitic nature of the Socialist Workers Party (SWP). As it said: "At our best we [the direct action movement] have developed radical anti-capitalist ideas through creative actions... brought off with no leaders giving us orders, just mutual aid and solidarity between groups and individuals. The same ideas also inspire the vision of the world many of us want to see – a free community based on co-operation, not competition and hierarchies. The SWP, however, see the Party as all important. The resistance of the oppressed must be controlled and directed by the party leadership to succeed..." The leaflet was right to argue that "despite their radical language the SWP is fundamentally opposed to our movement" – indeed any movement of working class self-liberation.

All in all, the politics of the N30 demo were excellent – libertarian in spirit, method and vision. However, the turning over of a (very conveniently placed) empty police van by some of the (unmasked) protesters does raise questions.

Firstly the police obviously had the numbers, and resources to win any confrontation (unlike June 18). Euston Station forecourt is an easily enclosed space, heavily monitored by CCTV. The chances were that we would lose, so why provide the police with easy targets?

Secondly, why should demos always become riots? The politics of the demo can be lost (as can be seen from the coverage where opposition to privatisation and other issues were lost). This is not a plea for pacifism (we know that the police attack peaceful demos and self-defence is essential). Rather it is a plea for intelligence and analysis. Why chance getting arrested when the risks are clearly higher than the rewards? After all, if all demos become riots they will only become the activity of those young, confident and strong enough to handle them. Is this really what we want? To exclude the bulk of the population from our activities? Of course not.

The next day Prescott pulled Railtrack out of the contract to privatise the London Underground. This may have been pure coincidence. The next example of market madness is the privatisation of Air Traffic Control. Perhaps it's time to Reclaim the Skies?

For further news of N30, see our special report starting page 13.

CLOSE CAMPSFIELD DOWN !

Sixth Anniversary Demonstration

Three hundred people marked the sixth anniversary of the opening of Campsfield Immigration Detention Centre

Despite a heavy police presence and constant police harassment, (two pigs for every protester, backed up with police horses and a helicopter), protesters kept up a noisy protest for two hours before dispersing.

On arrival at the detention centre protesters were forced to park half a mile away from the camp. Every protester was photographed and videoed by the police as they arrived at the gates of the camp and the surveillance continued throughout the demonstration only stopping for ten minutes when police attacked the protesters.

Campsfield is surrounded by a 20-foot-high, half-inch thick metal wall. Protesters banged on it with their hands to let the refugees in the camp know they were there. Police decided this was causing 'criminal damage' to the fence and ordered the protesters to desist. This only encouraged people to bang even harder. The police then charged the demonstrators and pulled people away from the fence dragging them through a hedgerow and literally throwing them into the field adjacent to the camp. A line of police was then formed at the fence to keep protesters away from it.

Demonstrators let off multicoloured helium balloons that tangled above the fence, their strings caught on the razor wire. Paper planes flew over carrying messages of support to the detainees to the sound of drums, flutes, guitars, pots and pans.

Group 4, who run Campsfield for the Immigration Service, were clearly nervous. Bolts along the fence had been welded solid. Detainees were locked indoors until the demonstration finished. The government need to understand that these protests will continue until they stop imprisoning people without trial, without reason and without time limit, punishing people for seeking asylum.

At the end of the demo protesters agreed to continue opposition to existing detention centres Campsfield (Oxfordshire), Harmondsworth (Heathrow), Tinsley (Gatwick), Haslar (Portsmouth), Rochester Prison (Kent) and against the new detention centres planned at Oakington (Cambridgeshire), and Aldington (Kent).

National Coalition of Anti-Deportation Campaigns (NCADC); 110 Hamstead Road, Birmingham B20 2QS; telephone 0121 554 6947, fax 0870 055 4570; email: ncadc@ncadc.demon.co.uk; website: www.ncadc.demon.co.uk.

Asylum seekers demonstrating in Trafalgar Square last year

Victory for John Quaquah !

Straw fails to deport Campsfield detainee

The High Court on 15 December 1999 quashed a decision of the Home Secretary to deport John Quaquah, an asylum seeker who is suing the Home Office after events at Campsfield Immigrant Detention Centre in 1997.

John Quaquah was detained at Campsfield in August 1997 when he, and eight others, were charged with offences of riot and spent ten months in prison before coming to trial. All nine were acquitted of those charges after the criminal trial collapsed in June 1998 when the evidence of Group 4 employees – running the detention centre under a private contract – was found to be unreliable. The behaviour of these Group 4 officers was described as "wicked" by the High Court.

After his acquittal, John sought to bring a claim for damages for malicious prosecution against the Home Office as well as Group 4. He was then served with a deportation order. However the High Court ruled on 15 December that the deportation order should be quashed for failing to pay proper regard to the requirements of Article 6 of the European Convention of Human Rights and the requirements of the new Civil Procedure Rules, both of which require an 'equality of arms' for parties engaged in litigation. Put simply, this means that Jack Straw's attempt to avoid being sued by deporting someone has failed.

Straw has learned nothing from this episode. Group 4 are amongst the front-runners, along with weirdo godbotherer private prisons outfit Wackenhut, to run the new 'open' detention centre at Oakington. The Campsfield Nine campaign to try and teach the Home Office a lesson goes on.

Campsfield Nine Defence Campaign on 01865 557 282 or 07961 392 510. More information on anti-deportation can be found at www.ncadc.demon.co.uk.

Direct actions in solidarity with the people of West Papua

An area almost the size of England is to be destroyed by a giant infrastructure project in the Mamberamo region. A large dam flooding an area the size of Holland will spearhead logging, plantations, mining and heavy industry in the surrounding area. The 9,000-strong indigenous population including at least 14 uncontacted tribes, are to be forcibly removed.

Rio Tinto Offices Occupied

On 4 October, activists from across the South West occupied both offices of Rio Tinto in Bristol in solidarity with the Free Papua Movement (OPM). Rio Tinto is the largest mining company in the world, supporting oppressive regimes across the world in return for military protection of their profitable operations. In West Papua, together with the brutal Indonesian military they have inflicted massive environmental devastation and human suffering. However in the face of corporate and state violence the people of West Papua have fought back. The aims of the action in Bristol were to disrupt the business of the company, to expose their abuses and show solidarity with the OPM, and take action with activists from other areas. It was successful on all counts.

Just before 9am, 12 suited activists walked past security (busy dealing with diversionary 'drunks') and occupied the Mining and Exploration offices on the seventh floor. Police arrived very quickly in five cars and three vans, trashing a door and office equipment while clearing activists out. After an hour people left with no arrests to join the picket outside. Police confiscated a D-lock from one occupier and banners after a banner drop from a nearby footbridge. After a break for lunch and getting the D-lock back from the cop shop, the well-dressed rabble visited the second offices (central registration) for more of the same. The D-lock was put to good use as two women locked on to each other and a filing cabinet. In another office files were well-shuffled, and next door a man barricaded himself in and got down to some useful office work. Three were arrested and held overnight for Breach of the Peace. All the time outside leaflets were given out and the building transformed with banners. People involved felt very positive about the first regional action in the South West, with lots of useful lessons and good experience of working together. The SWARM (South West Active Resistance Movement) is alive.

An ARCO Infiltration

The oil giant ARCO are involved in the exploration and development of Benoui Bay off West Papua and give economic and political support to the murderous Indonesian regime. On 4 October their offices in Guildford were invaded by a dozen besuited Brighton people who went almost totally unnoticed by staff for up to half an hour. During this time they walked around the finance department, reading and re-organising files, losing keys to locked filing cabinets, having creative fun with computers and distributing hundreds of flyers into files, handbags and outgoing mail.

When people eventually left, the fire alarm to the three-floored building mysteriously went off. Two people were chased by security for a mile across town before making a cheeky getaway. The workers had the chance to wonder what the fuck was going on for an hour on full wages; the company lost hundreds of worker hours and they'll be discovering our flyers for many years to come!

⋯⋯› *For up-to-date news from West Papua get on the OPM SG email newslist or check out the web page at: www.eco-action.org/opm/. UK contacts include: South East & General Information OPM SG, 43 Gardner Street, Brighton, East Sussex BN1 1UN; South-West c/o Kebele, 14 Robertson Road, Bristol BS5 6JY; email: kebele@marsbard.com.*

Massacre in West Papua

The Government of Indonesia carried out a massacre on 2 December 1999 in Timika, West Papua. Hundreds of Papuans were also injured. This December massacre is only one of the countless others in which more than 300,000 Papuans have been killed since 1962. While ethnic cleansing continues in West Papua, the Indonesians – with massive help from the west have resettled hundreds of thousands of racially and culturally different Indonesians under the so-called 'Transmigrasi Project', the largest resettlement project ever in history.

The background for the killings and the 'Transmigrasi Project' is the West's greed for the rich resources of West Papua, in particular oil, copper, gold and timber. In December, West Papuans showed, with the raising of the 'Morning Star' flag, symbol for freedom, their demand for full independence from Indonesia.

British Nazis in Spain

Religious 'charity' help finance a British Nazi settlement in an abandoned village in Spain

El Pais, Spain's largest newspaper headlined its front page on 14 November 1999, "English Nazi Group Buys Abandoned Village in Spain." The nazis in question, the 'International Third Position' (ITP), have bought Los Pedriches, 92 km from Valencia. It is a small hamlet of eight houses, of which ITP has bought seven from the original owners, who moved to the cities twenty years ago.

ITP is rebuilding the hamlet with a current permanent population of four, receiving visits from Spanish, British and other European fascist groups. 'St. Michael Archangel', a British catholic 'charity', contributed £7,000 towards the purchase of the town. The money is said to have come from charity shops in London. Spanish and European fascist groups had unsuccessfully tried to buy other villages in Spain, in the region of Aragon. It appears that the ITP intend to use the village as a safe place in which to meet, organise, train etc. without police surveillance. They already own three villages in France.

This story was taken up by major papers in the UK but Larry O'Hara's magazine, *Notes from the Borderland* exposed the charity shops and the ITP plans over a year ago. A few months after publication the charity shop front angle was run in *Searchlight* and various mainstream papers – with no mention of O'Hara.

⋯⋯› *Notes from the Borderland* can be obtained from all dodgy bookshops and from BM 4769, London WC1N 3XX.

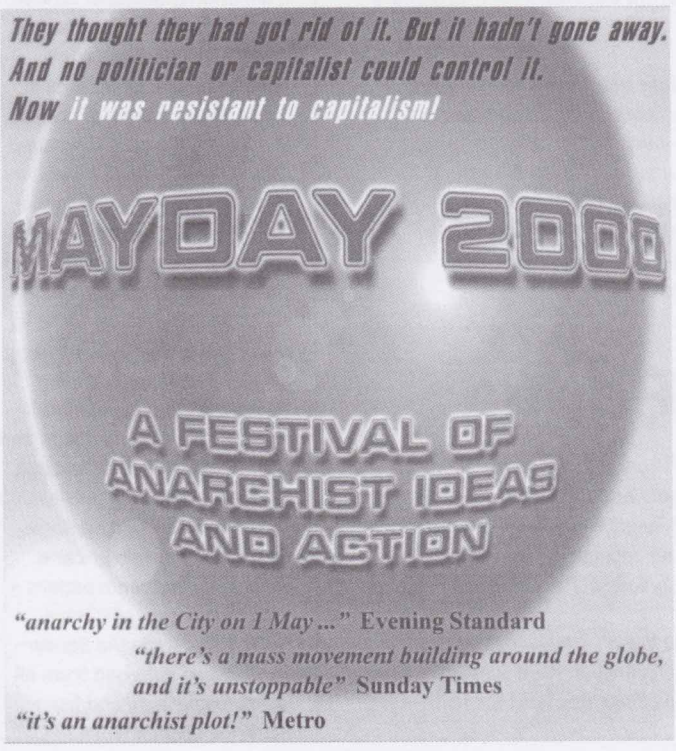
MAYDAY2000

This year anarchists will do something positive on Mayday in London, other than dutifully make up the (pitifully low) numbers on another boring march

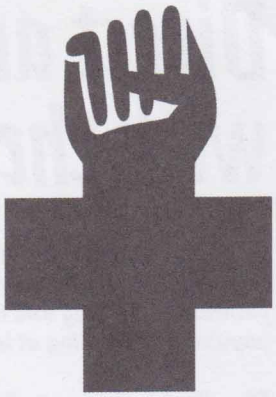
Mayday 2000: "a festival of anti capitalist ideas and action" is an event aiming to continue the process of dialogue and analysis started at Bradford 98, and build on the energy of J18. There will be a four day festival starting with a critical mass and history walk on April 28, then on Saturday and Sunday a conference to bring together anti-capitalist theory and practice. Saturday will be a populist event with speakers and workshops and a bookfair which will try to reach people who may not usually go to a political conference so we can learn from each other. There will be films, music and many diverse events taking place in the conference venue and outside of it. Sunday will be a more structured series of workshops when we will look together at our lives and struggles, our history and the future. On Monday May 1st there will be a mass action where, armed with our new knowledge about the German Revolution and the theory of surplus value, we will bring about the revolution.

Mayday is attempting to bring together theory and practice in our fight against capitalism. There will be workshops on squatting, workplace organising, etc. and practical and artistic activities, along with comrades from abroad talking about struggles such as the Italian Autonomia movement. As we are fighting against alienation in all aspects of our lives, we are trying to break down the artificial distinctions between life and politics at Mayday and make the event a creative, enjoyable as well as productive weekend. But this won't happen without you! There are general meetings once a month but also subgroups including fund-raising, publicity, cultural events and more.

⇢ *To get involved, there is an email discussion list at mayday2000-subscribe@egroups.com. or write to Mayday 2000, BM Mayday, London WC1N 3XX.*



ABC UK Network Folds



The Anarchist Black Cross Network in the UK has folded due to burn-out. There were simply not enough ABC comrades to keep the network, prisoners lists etc going.

This is sad news for all class struggle prisoners. There are, however, several local ABC groups still supporting prisoners. Details of the ones we know about are on the Contacts page. The pamphlet 'No Comment' and other ABC leaflets can still be obtained from Haven Distribution, 27 Old Gloucester Street, London WC1N 3XX.

As well as Haven, who supply books free to prisoners, the local ABC groups and individual prisoner campaigns a new network CAGE is being set up to oppose the prison building program, the locking up of asylum seekers and the prison state.

⇢ *Contact: CAGE c/o 180-188 Mansfield Road, Nottinghamshire NG1 3HW; email: cage@veggies.org.uk.*

Rat Thrown Off by Sinking Ship

Nick Hudson, the odious editor of the *Dover Express* (see *Black Flag* 215 & 218) was sacked by his employers, Kent Regional Newspapers (KRN) in December 1999.

He was apparently not dismissed because of the racist filth he has consistently printed about asylum seekers, but because he wrote an attack on Hoverspeed (the operators of the hovercraft ferry from Dover), which led the company to make a formal complaint about him. We also understand that at the KRN christmas party Hudson was involved in an altercation during which he received a slap from another member of staff. Hudson went storming around in search of witnesses but, strangely, no-one seemed to have seen the incident.

Death Control?

Four Spanish war-resisters may face up to two years in prison after being judged by a military court (consejo de guerra). Their crime? – putting giant condoms on cannons!

Of course, in order to do this, they had to get into the military installations, and in the process violated military safety rules under which they are being charged despite being civilians. The action was part of a larger campaign which aims to take civil disobedience and non-collaboration with all aspects of the war machine into military institutions. It is a new strategy developed by the Spanish and Basque war resisters and the Army is now fighting back with their own laws.

BUTCHERY IN CHECHNYA

Overseeing the aerial bombardment of Yugoslavia, Tony Blair justified NATO's actions in the name of a "new internationalism where the brutal repression of whole ethnic groups will no longer be tolerated." Those of us who condemned this "military humanism" (as Noam Chomsky has dryly termed it) as the same old imperialism in post-Cold War guise were denounced by the state department socialists of today. The slaughter of thousands of Chechens by a resurgent Russian military, though, has roused neither the ire of the NATO 'internationalists' nor their 'humanitarian' cheerleaders. Beyond token condemnation of the 'excesses' of the Russian military, the butchery in the Caucasus has become an 'internal' matter for Yeltsin, Putin and their generals to deal with as they see fit. Moscow's ultimate aim, as in its ill-fated 1994-96 war, is to install a puppet regime in Chechnya.

In the run up to the presidential elections, a war in Chechnya is a useful distraction from the economic chaos and corruption of daily life in Russia

In the run up to the presidential elections, a war in Chechnya is a useful distraction from the economic chaos and corruption of daily life in Russia. Anatoly Chubais, a Kremlin insider, has remarked that "the Russian army is being revived in Chechnya." Putin clearly relished the opportunity to use a popular war to underwrite his claim to the presidency. It should be remembered that the pretext for the invasion of Chechnya was the battle against 'terrorism' in response to apartment block bombings last year which killed 300, and which Moscow blamed on Chechen militants. Not a scrap of evidence has been produced to demonstrate a Chechen connection to the bombs and given Putin's KGB links and the level of premeditation involved in the Chechen invasion, we should be cynical as to the real source of the bombings.

In 1994-96, Russian soldiers were slaughtered in their thousands in combat in the region. This time, inspired by the NATO campaign in Yugoslavia, the Russians decided to raze the region through aerial bombardment before risking engagement on the ground. Thousands of refugees attempted to flee the region, only to be held in camps at the Ingushetian border, where they froze or starved. Over 300,000 were displaced by the Russian onslaught.

Russia has fired tank shells at teenage boys in Novy Sharoy, pummelled the village of Samashki with aircraft, rocket-launchers and tanks even though they know the village is empty of rebels, and signalled its intention to destroy the city of Grozny. Russian bombers were flying more than 100 sorties a day over Grozny. The mayor of the City, Lecha Dudayev, reported that over 500 died over the weekend of 27-28 November.

It has been suggested that the West's apathy in the face of the slaughter of the Chechen people (in greater numbers and with greater force than Milosevic's forces used against the Kosovars) is a result of its having no strategic interest at stake. In fact, the opposite is true. The Russian elite and the politicians of the West have a common agenda, the looting of the wreckage of the USSR. Since 1991, over $200 billion has left Russia, with both legal and illegal currency finding its way to Western banks. On 19 August the New York Times reported that up to $10 billion may have been laundered through the Bank of New York since 1998. The asset stripping of the USSR has been cheered on by the IMF, the World Bank and the US Treasury.

Meanwhile, some 70% of Russians now live below the poverty line, and capital investment is one-tenth what it was a decade ago. Those denounced as 'corruptionalists' when they're caught out are the liberal reformers Washington, Berlin and London have kept in power. They remain the West's first choice, and the impoverishment of the Russian people, and the massacre of the Chechens cannot be allowed to stand in the way of business as usual.

Blair's 'new internationalism' has proved itself quite content to watch while Moscow seeks to drown in blood the Chechens' right to independence. Yeltsin, Putin and 'reformers' like Anatoly Chubais (who supervised the give-away of the USSR's oil, metal and telecommunications assets) are worth money to the West. Chechen lives have no value at all. The rules of war in the era of 'military humanism' seem clear enough. As Umar Vitayev, a Chechen refugee, observed; "Everything has been destroyed; our factories, our industry. We're going to have to remain dependent on someone, because we don't have anything left."

Anti-War demos in Moscow

On 12 December anti-war activists took action against the war in Chechnya on 'Tverskaya', one of Moscow's main streets. The idea was to declare 'Tverskaya' as an area autonomous from the state and the Russian army. Twenty seven people (mostly anarchists and people from Rainbow Keepers) took part but after ten minutes seven people were arrested. The Transnational Radical Party, Russian Democratic Union, Movement against Violence (Ekaterinburg), Tatarian Muslim Party 'Vatan' and Revolution Contact Committi (a new group) have organized several actions but usually with only three to twenty people each time. Anti-war stickers have been put up in the underground with slogans like "The state is the main terrorist", "No war", "Bring the army home", "War-money-war" on the walls. But it isn't easy: Moscow is full of police and there is a pre-election campaign with the usual attendant propaganda. Most people don't support the protests against the war and the media won't report anti-war actions.

BLOOD FOR OIL

Colombian military personnel have invaded the traditional homeland of the U'wa people to make way for the drilling plans of oil giant Occidental

Colombia has, like many poor countries, the misfortune to possess oil. The oil is to be found in forest regions which also become vulnerable to exploitation as the roads to serve the oil reserves are built. And the money from the oil goes into the pockets of the elite, while the poor get poorer. Oil companies have had people killed in Latin America, just like they have in Nigeria and elsewhere. For years BP were the stalwarts of the oil murderers in Colombia, funding and training death squads.

In neighbouring Ecuador, Texaco devastated parts of the Oriente, and locals opposing the drilling were killed. The Cofan tribe of that region are now suing them in the US for $1 billion. But the latest saga in oil capital's rape of the continent is in Colombia, where the Los Angeles based company Occidental has been granted a permit for drilling on U'wa land. This is the culmination of a long campaign, and the U'wa, who number 5,000, have threatened mass suicide if Mother Earth's blood (ie. the oil) is spilt. Their view of the land might be a bit different to ours, but their words resonate even here. "We are seeking an explanation for this 'progress' that goes against life. We are demanding that this kind of progress stop, that oil exploitation in the heart of the Earth is halted, that the deliberate bleeding of the Earth stop... we ask that our brothers and sisters from other races and cultures unite in the struggle that we are undertaking... we believe that this struggle has to become a global crusade to defend life." – *Statement of the U'wa people, August 1998.*

The U'wa explain they prefer death by their own hand than the slow death of their environment and culture that oil production will bring. A core tenet of U'wa culture is the belief that the land that has sustained them for centuries is sacred. In March 1999, three indigenous rights activists, Terence Freitas, Ingrid Washinawatok and Lahe'ane'e Gay, were murdered by leftist guerrillas while working with the U'wa. These murders and the intimidation the U'wa have already experienced are a taste of the wider physical violence the oil project will bring. Throughout Colombia, oil and violence are inextricably linked. Occidental's pipeline, just north of U'wa territory, has been attacked by leftist guerrillas more than 600 times in its 13 years of existence, spilling some 1.7 million barrels of crude oil. The Colombian government has militarised oil production and pipeline zones, often persecuting local populations they assume are helping the guerrillas. Oil projects have already taken their toll on many other indigenous peoples of Colombia, including the Yarique, Cofan and Secoya.

The drilling plans threaten the survival of both the U'wa and their environment. Their cloud forest homeland in the Sierra Nevada de Cocuy mountains near the Venezuelan border is one of the most delicate, endangered forest eco-systems. It is rich in plant and animal life unique to the region, and the U'wa depend on the balance and bounty of the forest for their survival. Where oil companies have operated in other regions of the Amazon, cultural decay, pollution, land invasions and massive deforestation have followed. Occidental first got an exploration license in 1992. Since then, the U'wa have consistently opposed the project. They have taken a variety of actions including the filing of lawsuits against the government in Colombia, petitioning the Organisation of American States to intervene, appealing directly to Occidental's top executives, and lobbying company shareholders. Last April U'wa representatives came to Los Angeles to directly confront Occidental. Along with several hundred supporters the U'wa marched on Oxy's HQ and demanded a meeting with CEO Ray Irani. When they were refused, activists occupied the street in front of the building and held a rally on Oxy's front steps. Two days later, while the U'wa spoke at Occidental's shareholder meeting there were demos at Colombian consulates and embassies around the world.

The US has very strong ties with Colombia. Not only does Colombia sell most of its oil to the US market but under the auspices of the 'War on Drugs' US military aid to the repressive regime in Colombia continues to grow. This year Colombia received $289 million in aid making them the third largest recipient of US military aid in the world. The US has hundreds of military advisors in Colombia and the Clinton administration is proposing to give Colombia an additional $1.5 billion dollars. In August the Colombian government expanded the U'wa legal reserve. However, the expansion is only a portion of their traditional territory and most significantly the new borders were drawn so as to place Occidental's first drill site just outside of the reserve.

The U'wa link their struggle explicitly to the fight against the World Trade Organisation and other forms of corporate dominance. On 12 October '99, solidarity events were held in 20 cities in 10 countries around the world to demand that the Colombian government and Occidental Petroleum cancel their plans.

On 19 January 2000, more than 5,000 heavily-armed Colombian military personnel invaded U'wa territory, where Oxy's oil drilling site is situated. Faced with opposition by the U'wa, the military declared that "the oil will be extracted even over and above the U'wa." Police were sent to protect Occidental's engineers.

The U'wa are making an urgent call to the national and international community, and to all groups who have supported them, to mobilise against this last attempt to trample upon their existence and culture. "We U'wa will not cede our cultural, historic and ancient rights. We prefer genocide sponsored by the Colombian government rather than handing over our mother earth..."

⇢ *Rainforest Action Network (www.ran.org / rags@ran.org) can provide hard copies of materials. Additional info on: www.amazonwatch.org and www.moles.org.*

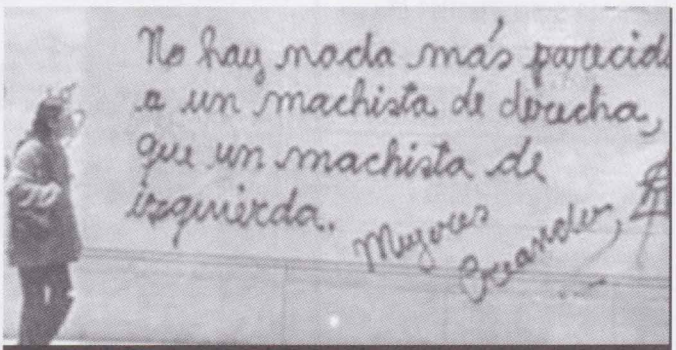
¡ VIVA LAS MUJERES CREANDO !

Anarcha Feminists subverting patriarchal order in Bolivia

Mujeres Creando ('Women Creating') are, in their own words, "a group of affection and defects, creativity and proposal." Set up with "the intention to be a transforming movement... a movement of cultural space, art and social proposals where we paint, we tell stories, we dance them, we cook them, subverting the patriarchal order." They draw from their Andean heritage, from feminism, and anarchism to fight patriarchy, power, the State and militarism. "Along with other Latin American sisters," they have "managed to separate what is the feminism of technocracy from the historically useful struggle against patriarchy."

The group only has 15-20 members, including the only openly lesbian activists in Bolivia. They run a small cultural centre, as well as publish and agitate. The group is best known for its graffiti, always signed Mujeres Creando. Favourite targets include neoliberals, smug macho leftists, and mainstream feminists ("gender technocrats").

A website about them describes them as "the country's only organisation that publicly, consistently and clearly speaks up for the oppressed, no matter who they are."



"There is nothing more like a rightist macho than a leftist macho."

Contact Mujeres Creando at Casilla 12806, La Paz, Bolivia. You can email them at creando@ceibo.entelnet.bo. There is a website about them at: www.americas.org/News/Features/9906_Gay_Rights/bolivias_mujeres_creando.htm.

Swedish Union Activist Murdered

Björn Söderberg, a veteran union activist in the Swedish syndicalist union, Sveriges Arbetares Centralorganisation (SAC) was murdered by fascists on the evening of 12 October. Söderberg, in his forties, was shot three times – once directly through the head – outside his apartment in the Stockholm suburb of Sätra.

Söderberg had recently played a crucial role in exposing a well-known fascist, Robert Vesterlund, at his workplace in southern Stockholm. The fascist had won the confidence of his workmates and had been elected as the local union steward. Upon being exposed however, he was removed from his union position and later left the union. In subsequent newspaper articles Vesterlund was quoted as saying "It's time to get tough." Since then, he kept close tabs on Söderberg, amongst other things obtaining his passport photo (by law, a public document in Sweden).

Vesterlund's fascist career began in the youth organisation of the fascist parliamentary party Sverigedemokraterna (the Sweden Democrats). He recently joined the notoriously violent Swedish nazi group, Ariska Broderskapet (Aryan Brotherhood). Vesterlund was also involved, though never questioned by the police, in a car-bombing incident in June 1999, in which an anti-fascist journalist and his eight-year-old son were badly injured. The police have arrested three fascists suspected in connection with Söderberg's murder.

The SAC held demonstrations across Sweden in memory of Söderberg and against fascist violence on Saturday 23 October. The same day, fascists bombed the SAC-owned house Joe Hill Gården in Gävle. As well as being the offices of the local federation of SAC, the house has great symbolic value as the birth place of Joe Hill. (Joe Hill left Sweden and emigrated to the United States where he earned a name for himself within the ranks of the American syndicalist union IWW – Industrial Workers of the World). No one was killed in the attack, but parts of the house were demolished.

The demonstrations were, with a few exceptions, organised by the Swedish syndicalists, though other groups such as the large reformist unions, bolsheviks and other leftist organisations gave their support. Demonstrations ranged from 20,000 people in Stockholm, 6000 in Gothenburg, 3000 in Malmö, down to the hundreds in small towns like Borås and Luleå. In all, 25 cities and towns throughout the country saw demos.

The Syndicalist Youth Federation (SUF) criticised attempts to tone down the political content of the protests as going "directly against the views held by Björn Söderberg, in whose memory they were holding the manifestation, and against the principles of syndicalism!" The SUF added, "The fascists of Sweden understand that the Swedish syndicalists and workers' movement as a whole are the only threat they have to take on seriously."

Björn Söderberg was murdered by Fascists after exposing a fascist infiltrator in his workplace. When comrades, country-wide, honoured his memory with demonstrations, fascists responded by bombing the SAC office that had been Joe Hill's birthplace

The most brutal fascists are involved in the NSF (National Socialist Front) and Combat 18. Sweden is also one of the largest exporters of 'white power' music. The murder comes against a background of increasing fascist attacks on anti-fascists. However, according to AntiFascistisk Aktion, "the Swedish State continues to portray anti-fascists and extra-parliamentary activists as 'public enemies no.1', while remaining docile in the face of repeated fascist violence." They draw the logical conclusion: "we shall be forced to defend ourselves. The best defence is a good offence."

The Zlín Ten

More state victimisation of anti-fascists in Czech Republic

Regular readers will remember the cases of Vaclav Jez and Michal Patera, Czech anarchists arrested for defending themselves against fascist aggression. While Vaclav is now free and Michal is on bail, there is a new case.

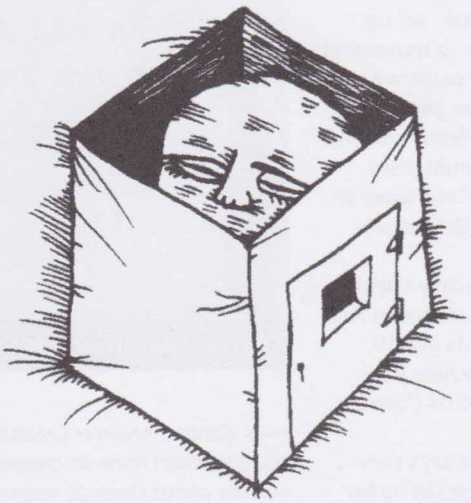
In February 1999, a trial began against ten anti-fascists and anarchists in Zlín, a major town in the east of the Czech Republic. The comrades are accused of "ideologically motivated heavy injury and public disturbance committed in an organised group" and could face ten-year sentences. The accusations date back to Spring 1997, when a dozen nazi skinheads from the 'Patriotic Front' clashed with a smaller group of anti-fascists, leaving one nazi badly wounded before they ran away. The police subsequently arrested all the anti-fascists and rounded up well-known anarchists. The police case is that the 10 anarchists attacked without provocation some "innocent citizens" waiting for a bus. Of course, these innocent citizens were nothing to do with the neo-nazis, not even the one wearing a Celtic cross!

Until August 1999, the situation for the Zlín Ten had looked good. Lawyers, paid for by the Czech ABC Fund, proved that several nazis had perjured themselves and it looked like our comrades were not in great danger. Unfortunately, the situation changed, and confidential discussions with lawyers indicate that there is political pressure to give the Ten 5-10 years long sentences.

The Federation of Social Anarchists (Czech IWA section) are asking for international publicity for the Zlín Ten. The Zlín City Court's decision is not final, but it is rare for the High Court to overturn such a sentence.

In the Ghetto

Roma community imprisoned by wall in Czech Republic



Unhindered by the Czech government, a town in the Czech Republic was able to build a wall round an area occupied by Roma, confining them to a Ghetto. The town of Ustinad Labem began to build its two metre high wall of breeze blocks and steel around buildings on one side of Maticni Street at about 4am one morning in early October. It was completed by the evening.

The builders were protected by 80 police. With grim echoes of Nazi occupation, Roma from the new ghetto were not allowed out of their houses while the wall was built. The wall had three brown steel doors to allow access to the block. It was intended that these would be locked at ten at night.

The creation of the Ghetto, probably the first in post war Europe, was fought all the way by Roma activists and Human Rights institutions. Yet the Czech Government displayed extraordinary complacency in its handling of the crisis. The proposal for the wall first appeared in May 1998 and the Czech government was warned that the wall would be a violation of international law.

In March 1999, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination warned that the Czech government was not doing enough to prohibit this unlawful act of racial segregation. More recently, in June, Ramiro Cibrian, the EU envoy to the Czech Republic, said that the Czech Republic could not be considered for EU membership if the wall was built. In May '99, and again a week before the wall was built, the European Roma Rights Centre (ERRC) called on Czech authorities to halt the plans to build the wall.

The first attempt to build the wall took place on 5 October, when builders put up a series of pillars, a gate, and three sections of wall before Roma, acting peacefully, blocked further construction. The next day Romani activists from around the Czech Republic came to Ustinad Labem and dismantled sections of wall, by 7 October Romani activists had taken down the rest. Protests against the wall continued throughout the week both in Usti and around the Czech Republic.

However, other high ranking Czech officials down-played the importance of the wall and, although legally empowered to do so, Czech authorities entirely failed to prevent its construction. Indeed, the Czech parliament didn't get round to annulling the original resolution of the Ustinad Labem town council to build the wall until the afternoon of 13 October, two hours after the wall was completed.

Rioters Greet Clinton – Greek Anarchists Do it Again!

Athens, 20 November: Almost at the same moment as Clinton arriving at the nearly-empty Athens' airport for his delayed 12-hour visit, hundreds of anarchists rioted through the centre of town and riot cops gassed leftist demonstrators. Clinton's visit was bound to result in this. It was set originally for 17 November, traditionally a day of protest in commemoration of the 1974 Polytechnic Uprising against the US-backed military junta. On top of this the US-backed bombing of Serbia has made Clinton even more of a hate figure in Greece than Bush. Bush visited a few months after the Gulf War – to a similar welcome.

Violence erupted despite the commitment of the KKE [Communist Party] to ensure that anarchists were not able to act. The KKE leadership have a record of attacking, arresting or grassing anarchists. This time they were themselves gassed by the cops as they tried to demonstrate. These arseholes even accused the anarchists of being, "provocateurs in service of the government ... intending to discredit communism and anti-Americanism"!

Social Exclusion in Colombia

Excluded from 'peace talks' by politicians and paramilitary 'leaders', Colombians seek solutions in direct action

Parties in Colombia are in the middle of peace talks to deal with two armies trying to seize power. The FARC (Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia) thinks it's winning but so does the army and both sides are negotiating for privileges before they will consider talking about peace. Civil society has been systematically excluded from the peace talks, only those in power (including the guerrillas and paramilitaries who have got to the negotiating table by the gun, and union leaders who represent no-one but themselves) have been invited. ELN (National Liberation Army) said they would include civil society in the negotiations and brought in a couple of friends and some representatives of big economic conglomerates but didn't ask a single peasant or poor person to join.

The problem with the authoritarian tradition of the left in Colombia is that it insists on the necessity of a vanguard to represent and make decisions for the people, thus spreading the problem of social exclusion to the political arena.

The response has been massive civil disobedience campaigns that reflect people's need to have a say about their own situation. There have been strikes everywhere, highway blockades, hunger strikes and riots in prisons. People are beginning to find their own way and to distrust their leaders. The indigenous movements have been very influential in this process as they have always had alternative – more democratic and horizontal – forms of organisation. As their lives and interests have been affected by the current situation, they have stimulated alternative ways of responding as well as direct action, which had seldom been an option in the past.

If peace talks are to achieve anything, the common people must be included and the only way of achieving this is through direct action. The armies sitting at the negotiating table do not represent anyone, people have to break into the peace talks and they're doing it now.

Those movements which espouse direct action and civil disobedience are the ones to watch. The essential work now is to find a way to confederate and articulate these movements. They had, until recently, been isolated from the rest of the political arena, mainly by the powers in control, but partly by the lack of experience of this kind of organisation in a political arena dominated by an authoritarian tradition, a tradition that is finally beginning to break apart.

'Anti Terrorist' Raid at Mehringhof

The latest in a wave of attacks on the autonomist left in Germany has seen the long-standing autonomist centre, Mehringhof, raided and comrades charged under anti-terrorist laws

The 'Mehringhof' Centre in West Berlin, once a squatted complex but now a collectively-owned project, has been home to scores of political projects and initiatives ranging from alternative and ecological collectives, Turkish and Kurdish leftist organisations, and autonomist and anti-fascist groups for well over a decade. Despite a marked decline in the strength of the extra-parliamentary left in Berlin over the past few years, police repression against the (autonomist) left continues. First the wave of repression against the autonomist periodical *Interim*, then the elimination of the remnants of the squatters movement, now the recent anti-terrorist police raids on the Mehringhof can be seen as part of the 'green-left' German government's determination to cleanse the new capital of all forms of fundamental opposition.

'Terrorist Hunt' In Berlin

At approximately 6am on Sunday 19 December, the Gneisenaustrasse in Berlin's Kreuzberg district filled with police vehicles. Around a thousand cops, many masked, including members of the GSG-9 anti-terrorist police, staged a surprise raid on the Mehringhof complex, purportedly to search for a weapons depot.

At the same time, Harald and Axel, two volunteers from the Mehringhof, were arrested in Berlin, and another comrade, Sabine was arrested at her home in Frankfurt. They are being charged with membership of a 'terrorist association', the Rote Zora / Revolutionary Cells (RZ). One is accused of storing and maintaining weapons and explosives in the Mehringhof complex and the other two with a 1987 bombing of a government office responsible for asylum policy in West Berlin. Sabine is also alleged to have taken part in an attack the year before on the chief of the foreigners division of the police bureaucracy in West Berlin, Harald Hollenberg. There are also allegations of involvement in another attack in 1987 on the head judge of the federal court in Berlin, Gunter Korbmacher, who was shot in legs.

During the raid on the Mehringhof, about 20 people who had been at a party there the night before were detained for five to six hours, during which time they could not use the phone or the toilets or drink water. Two have since been deported. The cops searched all the rooms in the complex, checked the computers, confiscated papers, tore up the floors, and drilled holes in the walls in an effort to find explosives. And what did they find? Nothing but a 1986 phone list which included the name of Otto Schily, now Germany's interior minister.

During the raid, about 150 people held a spontaneous demonstration, which was then attacked by the cops. Sabine, Axel, and Harald were carted off to Karlsruhe, and then to jail cells in Wuppertal, Düsseldorf and Cologne. Volunteers at the Mehringhof complex estimate the damage caused by the police raid to be over 100,000 DM. The cops have said further arrests will follow.

It is noteworthy that the accusations about concrete activities all come under the statute of limitations, meaning they were all committed too long ago to be punishable by law. These accusations have been cited by the state only to give extra weight to the actual charges which are concerned with the notion of membership of a criminal organisation (paragraph 129a in Germany – now being introduced all over the EU as a means of fighting political resistance groups).

CRACKDOWN IN INDONESIA

New laws are being introduced, legitimising state terror against resistance groups. Front Anti-Fascist (FAF) Bandung are fighting back

Last August, workers went on strike at the PT Rimba Aristama factory in Bandung. One of the strikers, Juju Juliyah, went on hunger strike because she and several other workers had been fired by the factory owner for their activities. Several days later Juju Juliyah died. She died for her beliefs, yet neither the factory management, the government nor the media has shown any concern over the tragedy.

On 4 September, FAF organised a demonstration in solidarity with Juju Juliyah and her fellow workers' struggle. SBI (Indonesian Labour Solidarity), GMIP, a labour organisation and FMD the radical student organisation also attended. The demonstration began outside the university building in Bandung with speeches. When enough people had gathered they marched through the slum districts, handing out leaflets in the streets. They then made their way to the national radio station headquarters to demand (amongst other things) that they cover Juju's case. But the radio station called in the army and the police to remove the demonstrators. One army truck parked up behind the building together with two trucks full of armed riot cops.

The demonstrators decided to march on to the city hall, only to find the building closed in anticipation of their arrival. Thirty or so demonstrators tried to break down the doors. Again, the cops arrived and prepared to attack. The demonstrators responded by making speeches in front of the building, managing to attract enough people's attention to avoid a beating from the cops.

On September 13, about 100 people occupied a local government building to demand abolition of new laws that legitimise the use of military force against resistance movements opposed to the government and the state. The law legitimises kidnapping, violence and even murder as tools to deal with resistance movements and their members. Demonstrators also made speeches outside the building and handed out leaflets. Those inside stated that they would refuse to leave until the government responded to their demands but that evening more than 500 anti-riot cops forcibly evicted the occupation.

The next morning more than 500 people gathered outside the building and tried to get back inside. Despite the efforts of 50 riot cops, the crowd managed to re-enter the building. Eventually local government spokesmen arrived to speak to the occupiers and promised to raise the issue of the new laws with the government. Having achieved their short term aim, the demonstrators left and marched to the national radio headquarters to demand that their message be broadcast over the airwaves. There they were attacked by riot cops.

Fleeing the riot cops, they moved on to march to KODAM (a military base) where they damaged a statue outside. When soldiers prepared to attack the demonstration, they marched back to the parliament building. Demands for the government to abolish the new laws were met, again, by 500 riot cops, whose chief tried to negotiate with the demonstrators. There was a battle with the police at 10pm that night when riot cops tried to move them on. Molotovs were thrown and the cops responded with a street blackout (all streetlights were turned off). The cops got very heavy and fired at the demonstrators, many of whom were beaten up badly. Those that escaped moved on to the UNPAD (padjadjaran university) building, and decided to stay there 'til the morning. Four demonstrators were caught by the army outside the building, but released the next day.

On 17 September, a chief of the Indonesian military, Wiranto, was due to arrive in Bandung to speak about the new laws against resistance movements. Demonstrators organised to prevent him speaking and to raise public awareness of the new laws. Actions also took place in Jakarta and Yogyakarta.

Several days later further demonstrations took place in Bandung – demonstrators graffitied the local government building, collected signatures for a petition and handed out thousands of leaflets. On 22 September nearly 1000 people gathered in front of the town hall and there were further clashes with the police – this was the last government meeting before the new laws were to be signed and approved. Attempts were made to force the radio station to broadcast their message and windows were smashed at the radio headquarters.

The next day the demonstrators successfully occupied the government building again and were finally able to broadcast their case over the airwaves for 15 minutes. They held the building all night and set up a stage at the front from which to make speeches. The following morning they closed the road in front of the building and attacked any military vehicles that tried to pass. They showed videos of the previous year's shooting tragedy in front of the Trisakti University to the public and held the building until the following morning.

⇢ *FAF still want books or other information on anarchist/class struggle politics. All correspondence should be sent to PO Box 1853, Bandung 40018 West Java, Indonesia. (Do not address mail to 'FAF' as it is censored – simply send to the PO Box with no name).*

Indonesian Anarchist Federation Formed

The first gathering of the Jaringan Anti-Fasis (JAF) anti-fascist network was held in December 1999 in Yogyakarta. It is a new anarchist-oriented network of radical youth groups in Indonesia. Also known as JAF Nusantara, because 'Nusantara' is the ancient name of Indonesia (a geographic description) which means islands in-between two great oceans, the Indian and the Pacific.

⇢ *The JAF can be emailed at: tjuangempa@hotmail.com; or write to: JAF, c/o ISI, Jalan. Gampingan No. 1, Wirobrajan, Yogyakarta.*

The Class War Kills Again

New Zealand waterfront workers stop work as picketer dies

Christine Clarke, who was hit by a car driving through a picket line in Lyttelton, died in hospital on New Year's Eve. Her funeral was held on 5 January in Christchurch. On the same day, 1000 members of the Waterfront Workers' Union around the country stopped work as a mark of respect. Workers in Lyttelton stopped work for 24 hours, while workers in other ports stopped work for one hour that afternoon. The arrivals of two ships at the Port of Lyttelton were postponed ahead of the stoppage. Workers also donated money to a trust account set up by the union for Clarke's family. Meanwhile, a 51-year-old man appeared in the Christchurch District Court charged with dangerous driving causing death.

Stateless in Seattle

N30

Fifty thousand on the streets, thirty thousand of them trade unionists... the WTO meeting abandoned... declaration of martial law... clouds of tear gas and volleys of rubber bullets... dockers shutting down West Coast ports from Seattle to San Pedro... hang on, we thought the class war was dead?!

30 November 1999 saw worldwide protests against global capital, and specifically, against the millennium World Trade Organisation talks in Seattle, USA. The tens of thousands of protesters on Seattle's streets came together from a huge spectrum of political and social backgrounds, including trade unionists, anarchists, pacifists, environmentalists, anti-racist activists, liberals, communists and local residents. Given the diverse (and often conflicting) views, aims and choice of tactics represented in this mass of people, the result (total shutdown and ultimate failure of the WTO talks), was quite an achievement.

Sheer force of numbers meant that, despite the declaration of a State of Emergency and the best efforts of a police force armed to the hilt and dressed like extras in Robocop, the demonstrators were able to block entry to the conference venue and close downtown Seattle for hours on end. Tactics were, in the main, non-violent. The police response was anything but. Whilst the cops were busy tear-gassing and beating the shit out of the crowds (and local residents), a small, but plucky group of anarchists (the 'Black Block') seized the opportunity to do a bit of proletarian shopping! Their efforts do not appear to have been universally appreciated...

Thousands were arrested, but used their predicament to cause virtual shut-down of the penal system. Arrestees refused to co-operate – refusing to give names or statements, refusing to get out of police vehicles and making thorough nuisances of themselves. The state's response was predictable: more beatings and worse inside the jails.

We reproduce below various eyewitness accounts of the actions in Seattle and in the rest of the world. We also include a brief piece on the tactics of (and rather peculiar response of some protesters to) the Black Block.

FOUR DAYS OF PROTEST

It kicked off in Seattle on the Sunday with a protest rally of solidarity. The next day the rallies got bigger. On these two days it looked like the policing was being handled by the young cops and trainees. Tuesday (the 30th) saw the biggest crowds, tens of thousands – a truly enormous carnival – human chains blocking the World Trade Centre. It was then that the cops got jumpy – only about 27 delegates got into WTO, mostly US and British.

A new group of police – tactical police – moved in and gassed people, shooting rubber bullets. Young kids, maybe 100, hit back by breaking some windows in retaliation.

That night the police gassed all of downtown from 3pm till 6pm. The kids broke some windows – McDonald's, Starbucks – they burned a few garbage cans. At 6pm a State of Emergency was declared. The police chased the kids outside the city limits, and started gassing that area too, gassing the neighbourhoods where the regular people live. The local people got mad too and joined those who had been herded out of the city. Soon there were 500, including the neighbourhood people – all very angry. Then people set up barricades at Seattle Central Community College. The cops spent about an hour getting themselves together before moving in and gassing the area.

On Wednesday the Longshoremen's Union held a union rally down at the docks and then marched to Third Avenue. As soon as they got there the cops started gassing them. There was an old lady there. She had gone downtown by bus to buy something. This lady was in her seventies and I saw her trying to run, but she couldn't breathe. She was in shock.

Wednesday saw mass arrests. Clinton was on his way, weeping crocodile tears about how he just LOVES peaceful protest. This police attack was US foreign policy, not some action decided by some bureaucrat in Seattle. This was the State Department.

JAIL STORIES

Bottleneck

On the Wednesday the police decided to limit any assembly close to the WTO convention. I went down town and joined a group of about 200 protesters sitting and holding hands in a public square, surrounded by robocops dressed in full riot gear. We were all arrested. Because we were not charged and hadn't seen a lawyer, we decided not to let them process us and bottle-necked the system. At the same time the next lot to be brought to the cop shop simply refused to get off the buses. After ten hours of delay they finally let us see our legal team who told us 510 arrests had been made that day.

Some of us were dragged violently to have our pictures and finger prints taken. Then our feet and hands were chained, and were taken to the jail bus again. On our way out we saw that the other groups were still in the buses (15 hours later!) They later told us that they built a 'toilet' using banners as walls, around a gap between the bus stairs and back doors. They also got rid of the plastic handcuffs using nail clippers. The police finally used tear gas inside the bus to evacuate them.

At 11pm our group finally arrived at the jail. They put us in a closed concrete cell for four hours, before letting us into our cells to sleep. I later heard that when one of our group refused to move until he saw a lawyer, the screw hit him, chained him to a chair, pepper sprayed his face, and covered it with cloth so he couldn't avoid the spray.

The next day at noon we were chained again and taken to court. At around 4pm we heard the 1000-strong support crowd outside the courts shouting, "Let Them Go!" The prosecutor was totally confused as our personal numbers (none of us gave names) and the police report file numbers didn't match. Some could have got away at this point, but to maintain solidarity with each other, everyone stayed. The idea was to stay in the system, clog it up and demand the same charges for everyone.

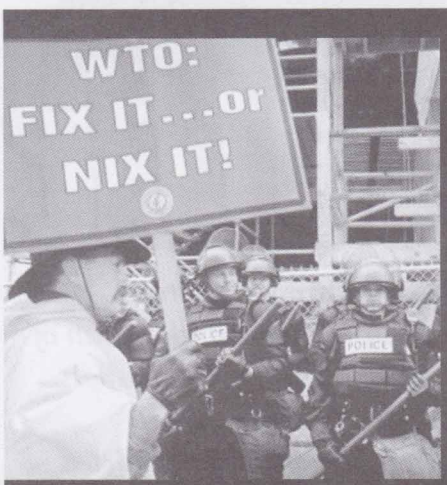
The next day we were again brought before the judge, while our legal team negotiated with the District Attorney. After two days the negotiations stopped and we were released on bail. The demonstrations went on for the duration of these four days, and tents were erected outside the court house. They were dismantled when all of us were finally processed out of the 'justice' system. During the days that we spent in jail, there were hundreds people demonstrating and blocking the court entrances.

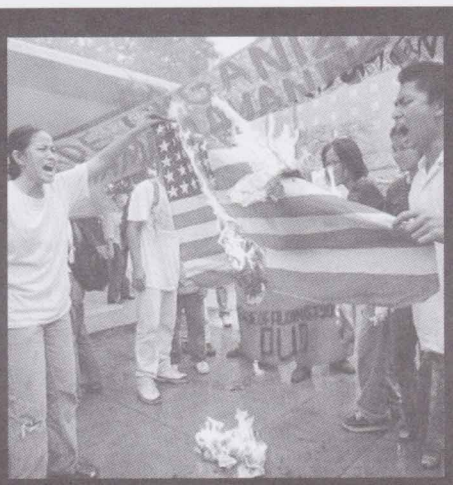
The police gave up arresting people in recognition that the system could not cope with any more detainees.

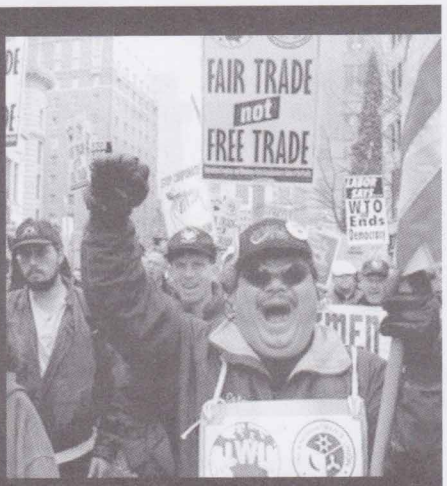
Torture tactics

An IWW member, we'll call her Marie, and her partner were the first to be arrested in Seattle. Using the tactic of non-compliance, they refused to give any information to the police. The tactic was used to clog up the system and promote widespread solidarity within jail. To break Marie down, the Seattle Police Department strapped her to a chair and beat her. They then kicked her while lying prone on the floor. She was separated from her partner and they threatened to strip her naked and periodically would unbuckle the harness she was wearing intimidating her with the threat of gang rape. She continued to refuse to give any information despite being pepper-sprayed.

Another group were brought in who knew nothing about jail solidarity and gave the police all the information they asked for. When Marie and her partner began coaching the new arrestees on jail solidarity, they were again thrown into isolation, beaten and then left in solitary for 18 hours. When the entire group were brought before the court, it transpired that there were no records of Marie and her partner's arrest nor any official documentation of their presence. They were immediately released into downtown Seattle, traumatised into the middle of a riot.







"I want to emphasise, these protesters were not violent people. They were the most non-violent people I have ever seen. Even when I was screaming at a cop, this girl came up to me and said, "Do not scream. This is non-violent." These people were too much to believe. They must meditate all the time, I don't know." Eyewitness

"There was impressive solidarity shown with the prisoners, with banners reading "Free the Seattle 500, Jail the Fortune 500" and people camping for three days and nights outside the jail. We began to hear shouts from the outside calling "Let Them Go!" During the days that we spent in jail, there were hundreds of people demonstrating and blocking the court entrances." Eyewitness

"When we got here, the Steelworkers weren't very queer-friendly. As the week wore on, they got more comfortable with us. My nipples stand in solidarity with the Steelworkers and Teamsters and all labouring people!" Lesbian Avenger

THE BLACK BLOCK

Nice to see young people enjoying themselves

There was considerable media hype around the group of masked-up anarcho types from Eugene (and others who joined them) who trashed some shops. The media excitement was mostly in the US and allowed an array of unhelpful tired old divisive opinions to be aired. You would think this was the first time anyone had smashed a window.

Report from one section of the anarchist Black Block

Several groups of individuals in the Black Block attacked various corporate targets in downtown Seattle. Among them were (to name just a few): Fidelity Investment, Bank of America, US Bancorp, Key Bank and Washington Mutual Bank, Old Navy, Banana Republic, Gap, Nike Town, Levi's, McDonald's, Starbucks, Warner Bros and Planet Hollywood.

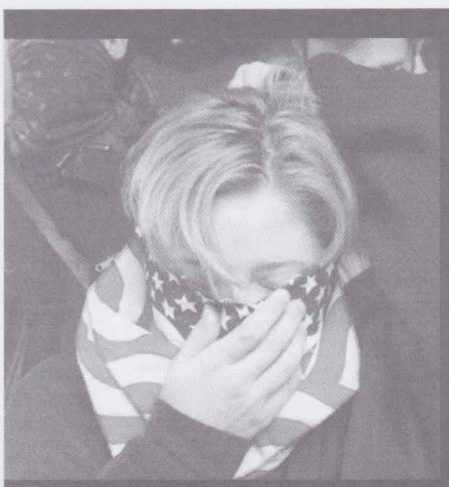
The activity lasted for over five hours and involved breaking storefront windows and doors and defacing facades. Slingshots, newspaper boxes, sledge hammers, mallets, crowbars and nail-pullers were used to strategically destroy corporate property and gain access (one of the three targeted Starbucks and Nike Town were looted).

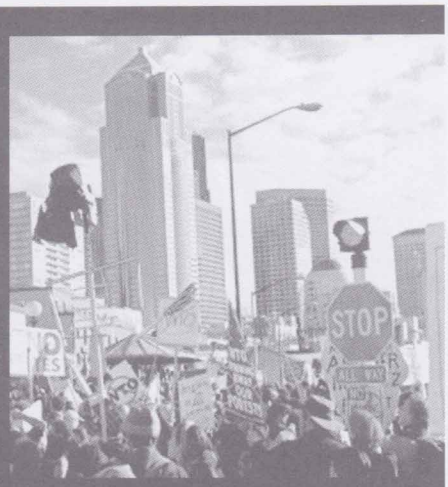
The Black Block was a loosely organised cluster of affinity groups and individuals. Unlike the vast majority of activists who were pepper-sprayed, tear-gassed and shot at with rubber bullets, most of the Black Block escaped serious injury by remaining constantly in motion and avoiding engagement with the police. We buddied up, kept tight and watched each others' backs. Those attacked by federal thugs were un-arrested by quick-thinking comrades. The sense of solidarity was awe-inspiring.

The Peace Police

Unfortunately, the presence and persistence of the 'peace police' was quite disturbing. On at least six separate occasions, so-called 'non-violent' activists physically attacked individuals who targeted corporate property. Some even went so far as to stand in front of the Nike Town superstore and tackle and shove the Black Block away. Indeed, such self-described 'peace-keepers' posed a much greater threat to individuals in the Black Block than the violent uniformed 'peace-keepers' sanctioned by the state (undercover officers have even used the cover of the activist peace-keepers to ambush those who engage in corporate property destruction).

The antics of the 'peace police' and the widespread disapproval in the US left-wing circles of the property destruction prompted the response below from Ward Churchill and others. Unlike in the UK, where the validity of attacking corporate property is hardly questioned, it's a burning issue in the US. During the campaign against the Criminal Justice Bill in Britain there were reports of uncomradely behaviour from some 'fluffy' elements, but nothing approaching the fanatical fervour of some protesters in Seattle who sunk to such depths as cleaning up the damage done to Nike Town, and beating and de-masking fellow protesters. Seriously weird!





"They are worried about a few windows being smashed. They should come and see the violence being done to our communities in the name of liberalisation of trade."
Philippino demonstrator

"If you were alive, the police gassed you. People coming back from work, kids, women, everyone. People would go out of their houses to see what was happening because these tear gas guns sound like a cannon - and they would get gassed. A block away there was a Texaco gas station - they threw tear gas at gas pumps, believe it or not - they were like vandals. They gassed a bus. I saw it with my own eyes. A bus. The driver, the riders, the people just abandoned it. They were also shooting this paint that you can only see with a florescent light. They would paint anyone and everyone and then go hunting them." **Eyewitness**

Don't Throw the Radicals Overboard

"The People, United, Will Never Be Defeated," chanted marchers protesting the WTO summit in Seattle. However, one of the most striking elements of the protests was the level of conflict between adherents of 'non-violence', and those who preferred to express more concretely their feelings towards global capitalism. A tide of reaction has been swelling against the latter, with great arrogance on the part of the former. As a group of activist intellectuals, we feel the need to state our support for the group the media has been calling, only somewhat inaccurately, "the Anarchists from Eugene."

We... controlled the streets of downtown Seattle from 7am on Tuesday to roughly 7pm. After that period, with declaration of martial law and the violent offensive by ●→

"We are really worried about these people. They seemingly have no fear of authority." **Businessman**

←● the cops... the streets became a war zone, but during that period, they were a liberated area. Inside a spectrum of protest and resistance activities took place, many of which warmed our hearts. Violence against property, as we'll call the attacks against corporate chain stores by activists, was one of the conscious strategies that was employed... Throughout the day activists, protecting their identities with hoods and kerchiefs, formed 'Black Blocks' to move en masse to attack unoccupied chain stores such as the Gap, Nike, Levi's, Disney, and Bank of America.

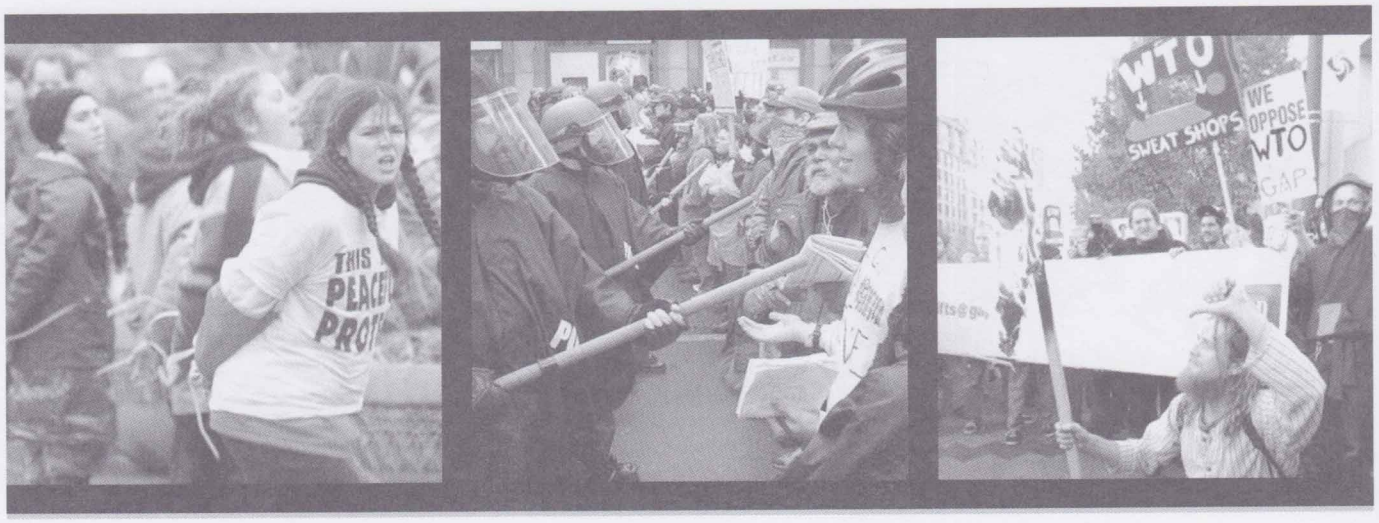
Adherents to 'non-violent' protest methods preach against targeting corporate property. We feel that this is an uncritical acceptance of the dominant value system of American consumer society: private property has a higher value than life.

We witnessed 'non-violent' activists linking arms to protect Nike Town from the aggressive acts of a Black Block. Riot police soon replaced the 'peace advocates' as if to say, "We'll take over now. You're only volunteering to protect property, we do it for a living." Elsewhere throughout the day 'non-violent' activists de-masked, and on at least one occasion beat, an individual who was acting against property. Many elements of the broad Left community have been alarmingly willing to distance themselves from direct, militant forms of protest. In its December 1 issue, the *World Trade Observer*, a daily tabloid published by a network of mainstream environmental and fair trade organisations, identified as a "troubling theme" the practice of "the police singling out peaceful demonstrators for gassing and beating... while ignoring black-clad hooligans breaking windows and spraying paint."

Other 'non-violent' protesters criticised the police, not for waging chemical warfare against protesters, but for failing to enter the crowd to extract the practitioners of militant protest. The implication is that the crowd would have handed over some of its members to the police, if the police had only asked.

There will undoubtedly be repercussions from the fact that we took control of a major city for twelve hours, as the leading administrative body of global capitalism met to brainstorm for the next millennium. Without the support of the rest of the WTO protesters, the direct action practitioners are at great risk. Gas-masks were declared illegal in Seattle under martial law, and the donning of hoods is being explored by prosecutors in Eugene as a possible excuse for sentence enhancement. The price of protecting oneself and one's identity from police violence is rising. As people who are interested in counteracting the ill effects of globalization and ensuring a liveable new millennium, we need to consciously confront the criminalization of radical political philosophies. We feel that those who belittle and distance themselves from the actions of "the Anarchists from Eugene" have either ignored or simply did not realise the level of contributions anarchists made towards bringing the N30 Festival of Resistance into reality. These include the innovative and joyful protest methods of the Direct Action Network, a sustained consciousness-raising effort from Left Bank Books, alternative social structures offered by Food Not Bombs and Homes Not Jails, the Anarchist hotline, housing networks, and so on.

Daniel Burton-Rose, Ward Churchill, Robin Hahnel, Kent Jewell, George Katsiaficas, Christian Parenti, Robert Perkinson



ACTS OF SOLIDARITY

The Longshore & Warehouse Union shut down the Port of Seattle and dozens of ports along the West Coast. Seattle taxi-drivers chose 30 November to strike over worsening pay and conditions. The Fire Brigade refused to turn their fire hoses on protesters despite repeated requests from the police. A delivery boy handed over his pizzas to the demonstrators outside the Westin Hotel, rather than deliver them to the right-wing talk radio presenters who had ordered them. ■

"I never got on with environmentalists until I realised we were all fighting for the same thing." Michigan steelworker, made redundant four months ago.

"The most significant division that emerged in our ranks occurred on Tuesday in front of Nike Town. A group of ghetto dwellers arrived there in the midst of the street festivities (the liberating of public space from corporate colonisation - called 'violence' by some) to enjoy footwear normally reserved for wealthier clientele. They were stopped and then blockaded by a determined crew of pacifists who warned them about giving the action 'a bad name'. Apparently that was too much for these kids, at least three of whom punched the pacifists before leaving." Eyewitness

"I haven't been marching but when the cops turn your neighbourhood into a war zone, it's time to get involved." Local Resident

N30 Global Capitalism Global Protest

There were actions against the WTO all over the world, including Italy, Germany, Czech Republic, Iceland, Turkey and the places below

Geneva

Activists damaged electricity transformers serving the WTO headquarters in an attempt to wipe out computer links to the ministerial meeting in Seattle.

The action caused a short-circuit and explosion in a small power supply building adjacent to the WTO. A two-hour power cut ensued, plunging the building into darkness and blackening computer screens. Computer servers were only restored four hours later at 9am.

Philippines

Eight thousand members and activists demonstrated outside the US embassy and the Presidential palace and there were massive demonstrations in Central Philippines against the 1995 Mining Act which allows 100% foreign equity in local projects, despite the objections of local tribespeople.

What is the World Trade Organisation?

The WTO is an international organisation of 134 member countries which is both a forum for negotiating international trade agreements and the monitoring and regulating body for enforcing the agreements. The WTO was created in 1995, by the passage of the provisions of 'Uruguay Round' of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). Their aim is to turn the world into one big market, with business having the power to force governments to remove socially and environmentally protective laws in the name of 'free trade.' This has already been achieved in many countries. It is the cutting edge of the neo-liberal agenda, the means by which capital hopes to erode the last vestiges of the post-war social democratic consensus.

India

In India, grass roots movements representing indigenous peoples, farmers, slum dwellers, women, victims of corporations such as Union Carbide, workers, students and other social sectors directly affected by the destructive process of capitalist globalisation took to the streets in several states to express their rejection of the WTO regime and demand India's withdrawal from it.

Karnataka demonstrate against Monsanto and WTO

Several thousand farmers, activists and unionists from Karnataka gathered at Mahatma Ghandi Park in Bangalore with banners and placards stating "We Don't Want Monsanto's Bullshit", "Keep Organic Free from Genetic Engineering". The police tried to prevent a sound system being used for speeches, but gave up after the farmers threatened to take the demo onto the surrounding streets. At the end of the demonstration they issued a 'Quit India' notice to Monsanto, urging the company to leave India or face direct action against its activities and installations.

A speaker from the Bellary district, where more than 18 tonnes of Monsanto's sorghum seeds were recently destroyed, said, "Farmers who used Monsanto's seeds are suffering. This year the entire crop of Monsanto's sorghum failed... ruining more than 1000 families. We already warned agribusiness when we destroyed the Cargill office in Bangalore in 1993... if you don't leave India soon we will kick you out physically." Another from the Raichur district, declared "In November 98, when we found that Monsanto was holding field trials in Karnataka, we decided to burn the crops in the action 'Cremation Monsanto'. We will continue taking direct action until these TNCs go away."

Union delegates warned, "Because of multinational corporations 7,000 Indian industries are closed today. If we keep quiet the whole country will be in the hands of transnational investors. This is the time for farmers and industrial workers to come closer and fight with unity... The WTO is trying to deliver countries like ours into the hands of transnational monopolies. But we will not allow them to interfere in our lives. We don't want multinational seed companies, we don't want genetically modified seeds. We have our own technologies and we are very happy with them."

Bullock-cart rally in Narmada valley

An anti-WTO demonstration with bullock-carts was organised in the village of Anjar by Rewa Ke Yuva (Youths for Narmada). More than 1,000 people from around 60 villages participated in the colourful procession.

Action against WTO and the Maheshwar Dam, New Delhi

Five hundred women and men from the Maheshwar area of the Narmada valley came to New Delhi to protest against the capitalist model of so-called 'development' at a three-day sit-in at Raj Ghat, the burial place of Mahatma Ghandi's ashes. Their action had two specific targets: the collusion of Indian industrial interests, multinational corporations and the German state to build a dam in Maheshwar, and the WTO regime, for its global vandalism.

At the same time, 10 representatives of the Save the Narmada Movement and supporters delivered more than 11,000 protest postcards written by people from the Maheshwar area to the German Embassy. (The German government is considering approving a Hermes guarantee for the dam which would remove all risk for the foreign corporations which are investing in its construction). The ten representatives were arrested whilst 100 other activists protested outside the embassy.

Back at Raj Ghat, activists from Jagerti Mahila Samiti (Committee for the Awakening of Women, a local grassroots movement organising in the slums of Delhi), Prawaha (a students' organisation), the National Alliance of Peoples' Movements and several local organisations burned a statue symbolising the WTO and made speeches.

World Bank occupied in New Delhi

More than 300 Adivasis (indigenous peoples) from Madya Pradesh jumped the fence of the World Bank building on the 24 November. They blocked entry to the building, covered it with posters, graffiti, cow shit and mud, sang slogans and traditional songs at the gate, and left only after Mr Lim, Director of the World Bank in India, came out to receive an open letter signed by Adivasis movements. The letter denounced the destructive impact of World Bank investments in forestry and of liberalisation of the timber trade enshrined in the WTO system. The letter clearly stated ●→

←● "We fought against the British and we will fight against the new form of colonialism that you represent with all our might."

Mr Lim's attempts to deliver a speech were shouted down by the Adivasis, who, after talking with World Bank officials for the last five years, had concluded that such 'dialogues' only served to betray, mislead and deceive while protecting commercial and industrial interests.

Netherlands: Schiphol, Amsterdam Airport ...Let's Fly to the WTO!

Dutch activists asked three airline companies who were sponsoring the WTO summit, to provide them with a charter to Seattle. A letter, sent to Lufthansa, Northwest Airways and United Airlines stated: "The decisions made in Seattle are of direct influence in our lives. We would like to use the opportunity you give us by sponsoring the summit. Let us express our opinions about the policies of the WTO. An estimated 300 people intend to travel with the free charter to Seattle. Our group will check in on 30 November at 12.30 to collect our tickets to avoid causing any inconvenience to other passengers."

On the day roughly 100 people gathered at noon, watched by a crowd of police and press. Flyers were distributed to explain the action to fellow passengers. There were plane 'tickets' for the free flight to Seattle, luggage labels and t-shirts declaring 'Seattle here we come'. After a short introduction to WTO and the action, banners were unrolled and the group entered the departure hall.

Surprisingly their visits to the three check in desks produced no tickets. So, unable to take to the air, the group played football, staged sit-ins, and generally made a nuisance of themselves, handing out a list of the addresses of the sponsors of the WTO summit.

France

Altogether, 80,000 people joined protests across the country, including a 20,000 strong demo in Paris. Our favourite was Eastern France where 800 miners clashed with cops ransacking a tax office and burning cars in two towns.

In Dijon forty activists occupied the Dijon Industry and Business institute and one bank agency 'place du theatre' in the financial centre of Dijon. As ten protesters wearing 'Enslaved by Money?' shirts blocked off the entrances of the two buildings using D-locks and arm-tubes, other groups threw fake blood and money on the pavements, glued anti-capitalist / anti-WTO posters on the walls, hung banners and handed out flyers and free drinks to passers-by. ■

CLINTON – CHAMPION OF LABOUR STANDARDS?

Small-scale capitalism is based on wage labour and alienation just as much as 'big business.' Local elites dominate, oppress and exploit as well as transnational ones

One of the positive aspects of Seattle was the fact that pre-action attempts were made to get workers involved. For example, a 'Labour Mobilisation Committee' (LMC) was formed mainly from rank-and-file AFL-CIO militants as well as IWW members and other labour activists. The LMC's purpose was to mobilise workers for a mass march and rally against the WTO in downtown Seattle on November 30. Hopefully this joint IWW and AFL-CIO activity will spread the ideas of revolutionary unionism amongst workers affiliated to business unions and point towards a more militant alternative. As for students, there was agitation at seven major high schools and four colleges for a city-wide walkout.

Less positive was the side-tracking of N30 aims and rhetoric from anti-capitalism into 'anti-globalisation'. Increased decision-making by national governments hardly changes the nature of capitalism and the nation-state is not under popular control. Yes, globalisation does make things worse but we shouldn't be fighting for a return to the 1960s. The social democratic consensus was never that great to begin with (as witnessed by the numerous struggles in the 1960s and 70s). The key point is that that consensus was the product of ruling class fear of a revolutionary wave like the one after the First World War. Nor should we be fooled by a North versus South battle – Southern elites are as happy to exploit and oppress their workers and ravage their environments as Northern ones (and many delegates from the 'developing' countries expressed the wish that the police had broken a few heads from the first to clear the streets).

Ultimately, the issue is capitalism and the state. Small-scale capitalism is based on wage labour and alienation just as much as 'big business.' Local elites oppress and exploit as well as transnational ones. Unless we recognise this, we will be lost in the politics of compromise, 'transitional demands' and supporting the lesser imperialist powers – in other words, the politics of reaction and state capitalism.

The North v South issue is complicated. The US is happy to share our critique of labour and environmental standards in the South when it suits, ie to impose terms on 'southern' capital. Unless we recognise that processes of imperialism still exist we run the risk of siding with the North against the South. Living standards in the third world are issues for third world workers. We should show solidarity with them, not to Clinton or the AFL.

Anarcho-Syndicalist Review (No. 27) notes that some independent unions in South Korea and Brazil have expressed concerns about spreading (crap) US labour standards across the world. Strong unions and confident workers movements are what raises labour conditions, not sham agreements. Even if the ill-fated WTO meeting had prioritised labour standards, they would fall to be discussed again at the next round of the WTO, typically in six to eight years. If this led to agreement, they could begin to be implemented by 2014. And some people wonder why anarchists argue for direct action, international organisation and struggle!

On to Davos

Davos is an exclusive ski resort in the Swiss Alps. You're more likely to find Fergie and a posse of paparazzi than masked-up militants ordering a Big Mac to go J18 style. Bringing the World Economic Forum to town so soon after Seattle (early February) can't have seemed such a good idea as riot cops had to protect the meeting with tear gas, which sadly does not distinguish between delegates, skiers or demonstrators.

Militants from the French unemployed/ workers' movement Droites Devant, the small farmers' Confederation Paysanne and Italian-based unionists from the COBAS were amongst the 2,000 protesters. International conferences will attract international protest. In Thailand the government preparations for an international conference next month have included 1,500 arrests.

International protests show that our resistance is global and lucky away results like Davos are as heartening as Seattle. However, without grass roots resistance these spectacular events are no more use than a photo of Fergie skiing into a tree.

AFTER SEATTLE 99

According to Machiavelli, the successful state requires "arms and money." November 30 in Seattle we saw the reality of both – armed police firing rubber bullets, pellets and tear gas, mobilised to protect the WTO delegates from over 100,000 protesters. The same scene was replayed with varying degrees of brutality in at least 20 other countries. The WTO manufactures the legal fiction which allows a global economy wherein the exploitation of labour by capital is maintained, wherein the poorest become fodder for the dreams of the richest. What underwrites the 'laws' of free trade is the use of force, a force manifest in Seattle in the mass arrests and baton charges used to enforce the curfew imposed by city mayor Paul Schell.

After the street battles of Seattle the big money players of international capital will sleep less soundly. The WTO, according to Clinton, was to be used to enforce a global standard with regard to workers rights and environmental protection. In the run-up to the WTO meeting the US rushed to get China into the WTO, while deliberately ignoring China's record of environmental despoliation and its habit of jailing union organisers. What was significant about November 30 was not simply that people have begun to see beyond the lies used to sell us the myths of 'globalisation', but that, as we saw also on June 18, increasing numbers have moved from disgust to action. With the collapse of Stalinism we were told that we lived at the 'End of History', that, bad as things might be, they could be little better. More and more of us, though, are refusing to accept that a world in which 828 million go hungry (according to UN estimates) while the planet's 358 billionaires exceed the combined annual incomes of the countries with 45% of the world's population can be the best we can aspire to.

We have begun to make history again. From the revolt of Spartacus, through the English Civil War and the French Revolution, to the working class uprisings in Spain in 1936 and the revolts of 1968, the invasion of the 'mob' onto the stage of history has been the stuff of nightmares for those who profit from the inequalities which structure our world. John Locke, one of the philosophical prophets of the Age of Enlightenment, noted fearfully that "the labourer's share, being seldom more than a bare subsistence, never allows that body of men time or opportunity to raise their thoughts above that or struggle with the richer for theirs (as one common interest) unless when some common and great distress, uniting them in one universal ferment, makes them forget respect and emboldens them to carve to their wants with armed force; and then sometimes they break in upon the rich and sweep all in front like a deluge." Behind the fictions of parliamentary democracy lie the arms of the state, ready to hold back those excluded from history. November 30 allowed the WTO delegates a glimpse of the return of 'universal ferment' and the rejection of what George Bush once wishfully called the 'New World Order'. Fear is never far from the thoughts of those who rule over the many on behalf of the few. Hence Jack Straw wants to revise the Prevention of Terrorism Act in the UK to criminalise any protests (from anti-fascism to anti-McDonald's to Zapatista support) which rely on the "use or threat" of violence (including violence to property) for "political" ends. When, as in Seattle, the Lords of Capital are forced to reveal the link between "arms and money" and that beneath the veneer of consent there lies the power of arms, they are forced to reveal another truth also; that, as Spinoza observed, "the sovereign power in a state has a right over a subject only in proportion to the excess of its power over that subject" and that "the vulgus (masses) is fearsome if it is not made to fear, for liberty and servitude are not easily reconciled." There is then, no 'right' under capital, only power – and the ruling class only has 'right' over us so long as it has the power to do so.

A world in which 828 million go hungry while 358 billionaires exceed the combined annual incomes of the countries with 45% of the world's population can't be the best we can aspire to

After Seattle, then, where do we go? Do we seek more set-piece confrontations like J18 and N30? Or do we seek to challenge the power of capital on the terrain of our everyday lives? The logic of 'globalisation' is simple – capital can roam the world seeking to exploit the cheapest labour it can find while the mass of working peoples lose their freedom of movement, their freedom to 'go'. Capital demands open borders for itself, and seals borders between nations for the rest of us. Hence, attempts to whip up panics over immigration and refugees. If we want to challenge the power of capital today, then we have to combat the 'globalisation from above' with a 'globalisation from below.' We have to support the right of 'relocation', of freedom of movement, for all working people, and seek to support the struggles of workers in whatever country they take place. The mobilisations across the globe on November 30 show what could be achieved. In the UK, the Blair government is seeking to reintroduce 'full employment' through the replacement of welfare with poverty-wage work. In the process it seeks to criminalise those who would resist this agenda. Curfews, tagging, incarceration. Peter Mandelson set out the New Labour agenda in 1997; capital requires flexibility in the labour it seeks to exploit; "A permanently excluded underclass actually hinders flexibility rather than enhancing it. If we are to promote flexibility we must find ways of getting people off dependency and into the labour market." (Low wage workers hold down wages without costing the State a penny.) Under the New Labour welfare state, as the sociologists Chris Jones and Tony Novak (*Poverty, Welfare & the Disciplinary State*, Routledge 1999) observe, "There are now no carrots in evidence, only sticks." The future promises both criminalisation of the poor and the hope of resistance. We should seek to support any and all struggles against the New Labour agenda – whether it be BT call centre workers going on strike, refugees calling a hunger strike or tenants fighting housing privatisation. In building such support we should seek to bring the methods of Seattle home. Bakunin once wrote that the purpose of revolutionary activity is always to seek to "break down the power of the bourgeoisie and the State and lay the ground for a new world." After Seattle, that new world has come to seem a little closer than before. ■

SHOOTING TO KILL!

The existence of a shoot-to-kill policy in the Six Counties is not in doubt. The number of police killings of armed robbers on the British mainland in recent years points to a shoot-to-kill strategy here too

Crime reporters are a curious breed. The majority are local hacks who report whatever happens under their noses, and hope the more salacious the story, the safer their job – at least for the next few months. There are a few though, who specialise in propaganda for the police. They conjure up folk devils like the Adamses, the Arifs, the Yardies and the Triads so that the Police Federation can call for a recruitment drive and the Michael Howards and Jack Straws of this world can further curb our 'civil liberties.' Some who come to mind include TV journalist Martin Short, *The Guardian*'s Nick Hopkins, and former *Time Out* hack, now at *The Observer*, Tony Thompson. Usually they just recycle what Scotland Yard tells them – for example Thompson had a piece, "Muggers Enter the Big League", in *The Observer* on 28/11/99 about how muggers are "turning to armed robbery and aggravated violence [because] there has been a steep decline in the number of stop-and-searches since the publication of the report into the Stephen Lawrence case." Just to refresh our memories, the issues in the McPherson report were 1) Racism and 2) Police Competence. Between the lines then, is the coded warning that most violent crime is committed by blacks and because the police have been accused of racism they can't tackle the real issue – violent black crime. Hence the use of the description 'mugger' in juxtaposition to 'armed robbery.' On any other level, the story makes no sense. No evidence is produced to support the contentions that 1) muggers are turning to more violent forms of crime or 2) that "crime figures are going up." The only point to the story is to allow Scotland Yard to smear the Lawrence inquiry agenda as a means of getting itself off the hook.

Once in a while though, Tony goes too far, says a little too much. Maybe because he spends so much of his time hanging round the Old Bill he forgets what's in the public domain and what he's supposed to keep to the canteen. His article in *The Observer* of 3/10/99, "High-Tech Crime of the Future Will Be All Mod Cons", is mostly a fantasy about 'cyber-crime', probably to prepare the way for new curbs on privacy on the Net. It does, though, contain one very curious statement; "Increased penalties for carrying firearms, along with an (sic) greatly increased likelihood of being shot dead by armed police will lead to more criminals using non-lethal weapons." Just an aside, really, nothing more. "...a greatly increased likelihood of being shot dead by armed police..." The police, we are told, have clear rules of engagement. They have to give a warning before they employ their weapons. There are just over 2,000 officers authorised to carry weapons in the London Metropolitan Police area. The numbers haven't changed much since the early 1990s. So why should there be an increased likelihood of being shot dead by armed police now, compared to the 60s heyday of the Great Train Robbers or the 'balaclavaed pomp' of the 70s?

This article contends that the reason is simple: since at least the mistaken identity shooting of Stephen Waldorf (believed by police to have been bank robber David Martin) on 14 January 1983 the police have employed a policy of premeditated use of lethal force in situations of armed robbery. A shoot-to-kill policy has been in operation in England to rival that carried out by the British Army in the Six Counties, and the use of such force and its wider implications should concern all of us.

The use of a shoot-to-kill strategy to deliberately target and execute Republican activists in the Six Counties has been identified by the families and friends of those murdered by the British state in such circumstances in the north of Ireland. In 1977 Lord Justice Gibson determined that "In law you may effect an arrest in the last extreme by shooting him (the suspect) dead. That's still an arrest." Between 1987-91 nineteen people were killed by under-cover SAS and RUC units in 'disputed' circumstances. In April 1988 the SAS killed three IRA members who had hijacked a car in Omagh. Michael Gerard Harte, his brother Martin, and Brian Mullin, were ambushed by an SAS team, which left by helicopter immediately after the killings. In 1990 Desmond Grew and Martin McCaughey were killed by the SAS at Loughall in County Armagh. In December 1990 Fergal Caraher was killed at a checkpoint in South Armagh, when Royal Marines opened fire without warning. In

1982, John Stalker, former Deputy Chief Constable of Manchester, was dispatched to investigate six killings by an SAS-trained RUC squad. He concluded that there was, if not policy, then at least an "inclination... to shoot suspects dead without warning rather than arrest them." In January 1990, that "inclination" was shown to apply to 'ordinary decent criminals' as well as to Republicans.

On 13 January 1990 Edward Hale, John McNeill and Peter Thompson were shot dead by undercover soldiers while robbing a bookmakers in West Belfast. The men were 'armed' with an imitation sub-machine gun and a starting pistol. No warnings were given nor any attempt made to effect an arrest. No explanation was offered as to why the armed undercover unit was in the area at the time, or why the driver of the car, clearly unarmed, was killed. One eyewitness claimed that a second unit was also involved; that a white Renault stopped and a man and woman gave cover to the undercover unit that killed Hale, McNeill and Thompson. The killings gave warning that the deployment of lethal force perfected against the nationalist community would be effected across the board, as the state saw fit.

The operation of a shoot-to-kill strategy in England predates the murder of Hale, McNeill and Thompson. The number of killings of armed robbers carried out by the police under 'disputed' circumstances is too great to ignore. Simply put, too many have been killed to accept the tragedy of coincidence as an adequate explanation. The evidence of strategy is unavoidable.

In 1983 David Martin escaped from Marlborough Street magistrates court, where he faced charges in relation to a number of robberies. A tip-off led police to target a yellow Mini in Earls Court on 14 January 1983. Mistaking a film technician, Stephen Waldorf for David Martin, they opened fire on the Mini, hitting him five times before dragging him out of the car and pistol-whipping him on the ground. Waldorf recalled no warning – the operation was, clearly, intended to kill.

In 1985 Inspector Douglas Lovelock shot and crippled Cherry Groce at her home in Brixton. Searching for one of her relatives, Lovelock shot "the first black shape I saw."

In February 1987 Dennis Bergin was shot dead by police staking out a London museum. At the inquest it was revealed that Bergin was shot by a police marksman who had not shouted out a warning before opening fire. The marksman claimed to have shouted out a warning after the third shot, having "not had time" up till that point.

In July 1987 Michael Flynn and Nicholas Payne were shot dead by police during an attempted robbery of a wages van at an abattoir in Shooters Hill.

In November 1987 Tony Ash was shot dead in a wages snatch at the Bejam supermarket in Woolwich, South East London. Ronnie Easterbrook was shot and wounded. A Thames Television crew was on hand, to ensure a very public execution. Again, Easterbrook recalled no warning being given. (Ronnie Easterbrook was given life for his part in the robbery and is clear that he was not supposed to have survived the Flying Squad ambush. In 1997 Ronnie Easterbrook went on hunger strike after being told he would never be released. Ronnie tried to escape from custody by blowing up a prison van during his trial and went on a number of dirty protests to publicise his case. If ever anyone deserved to be called 'staunch' it was Ronnie.)

On 13 April 1989 Jimmy Farrell and Terry Dewsnap were shot dead by PT17 marksmen during a post office robbery in North Harrow. John Gorman, who survived the ambush, told the inquest that he never heard the warning "armed police" at any stage. He was shot four times in the head, a foot, and twice in the arm.

In 1990 Kenny Baker was shot dead by PT17 near Reigate in Surrey, during an attempted raid on a Securicor van. The getaway driver, Mehmet Arif, heard no warning from the police. Kenny Baker was shot in the stomach and the face.

In a shoot out near the post office in Brockham, near Dorking, in August 1992 police injured both the robbery gang and members of the public. The officer in charge was quoted as stating that while he was sorry for any injuries to the public, "sometimes it was necessary to fight fire with fire."

In 1995 David Ewin, an unarmed suspected car thief was shot and killed by PC Patrick Hodgson. He was shot twice while he tried to drive away.

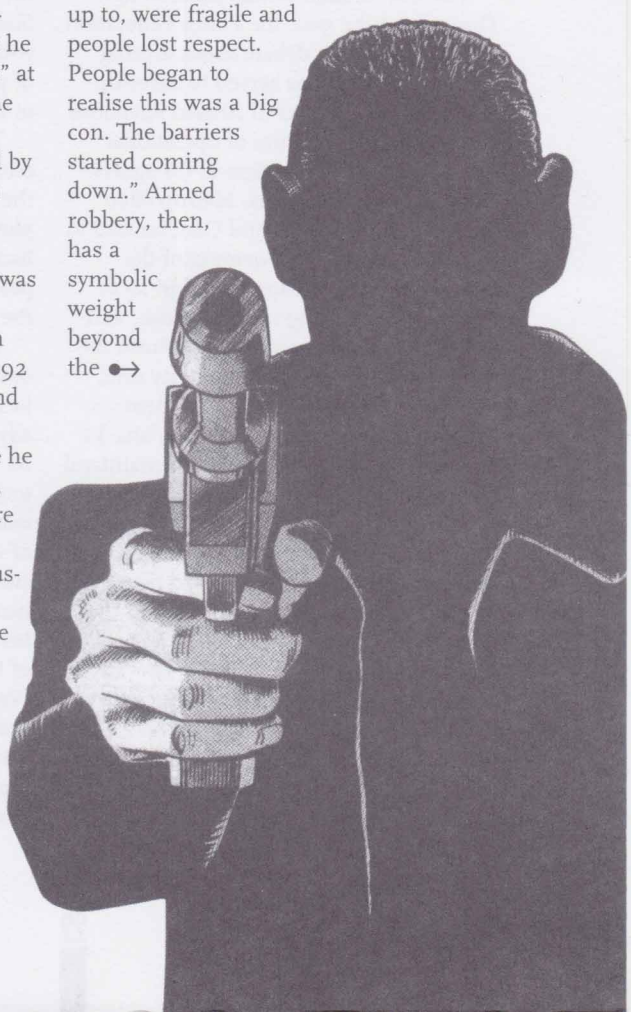
In 1998 armed police in Hastings entered the home of James Ashley. He was naked and unarmed. He was shot in the chest and died at the scene.

In 1999, there were three fatal shootings by police – Derek Bateman in Dorking on 22/6/99, Anthony Kitts in Falmouth, Cornwall on 10/4/99 and an unarmed man in Hackney on 22/9/99.

The killings recorded above – their circumstances, the fact that in every case those left alive had no record of any warning having been given – point inescapably towards the conclusion that what Stalker euphemistically called an "inclination... to shoot suspects dead without warning rather than arrest them" has been practiced in Britain by armed units of police. If this contention is accepted, the question then begging is... why?

What began with the use of shoot-to-kill to remind a few villains to check their manners concludes with the new Prevention of Terrorism Act... a redefinition of 'terrorism' intended to criminalise any and all effective resistance to the agenda of the state

On one level, the explanation is simple. In the sixties and seventies armed robbery began to appear a lucrative option. Bank robbery was the 'coming thing.' As Eric Mason, who has served over 17 years for armed robbery explains. "In the old days you had this thing, you don't do it because it's establishment. In the sixties, people began to realise that anything was fair game in the days of Profumo, people realised that politicians, people we looked up to, were fragile and people lost respect. People began to realise this was a big con. The barriers started coming down." Armed robbery, then, has a symbolic weight beyond the ↦



←● immediate effects of the crime itself. Whether it be the Bonnot Gang or Buster Edwards, the logic of a successful blag is that bourgeois property is not sacrosanct. The fear isn't that, inspired by the occasional success, we'll all start planning the next Brinks Mat or plotting to rob mail trains. As Eric Mason observed, there is a logic of disrespect that goes with the territory, and it is this disrespect, this not-knowing-your-place, that the police and their paymasters dread. For a society which thrives upon the exploitation of the many by the few to survive, the many need to be made to fear the few. Fear of the masses, and the need to instill fear in the masses is, in the last instance, the basis of all political discourse under capitalism. On that level, the operation of shoot-to-kill in the circumstances described is, also, symbolic. It is intended to scare us back into knowing our place. (It's also the reason why Harry Roberts, jailed for the killing of three police officers in 1966, will never be paroled. With football grounds still occasionally known to offer up a burst of "Harry Roberts is our friend", it is that fear of the mass and the consequent need to instill fear that means life for Harry will mean life.)

On that level, the operation of shoot-to-kill... is also symbolic. It is intended to scare us back into knowing our place

There is, though, much more to it. Throughout the 90s, the Police Federation has orchestrated a debate about arming the police, which has served to cover-up the increased number of Armed Response Units (and liberalisation of operational rules) and the introduction of CS sprays and long-handled batons. Metropolitan Police Commissioner Paul Condon said in 1993 "I don't seek [the arming of the police] but it could happen within 10 or 20 years." According to David Rose, writing in *The Observer* on 8/5/94, "From the early 1980s onwards, as inner-city riots gave way to coal strikes, poll tax demonstrations, gun-toting crack dealers, attacks by rural lager touts and renewed mainland campaign by the IRA, police officers have perceived their job to be getting more and more dangerous with every passing year." It is this perception that allowed the police to get their hands on CS gas, and on the long handled batons used to kill Brian Douglas in 1996.

But this is a deliberately manufactured perception. Murder of police officers is rare, about two a year. Of 19 officers killed between 1985-95, less than 50% were killed by gunshots. Recorded crime fell overall for the fifth consecutive year running in 1998. There is no evidence to support the alarmist perspective advanced by the police and their supporters in the Home Office. The arming debate is a code for 'civil disorder' much in the way that 'mugging' codes for black crime.

It used to be argued, as the sociologist Peter Waddington observed, that we were "policed by consent." With a labour movement resurgent after 1945, and social democracy a force with real political weight, policing was, we were told, a matter of mediation, of allowing a bit of 'pushing and shoving' on the picket lines to stop the drift to 'stoning and shooting.' With the abandonment of the social-democratic consensus in the late 70s, the police were deployed by the state to be the physical edge to the political assault on organised labour that culminated in the Miners' Strike. As Waddington puts it, "Those (post-war) understandings were finally fractured in the Miners' Strike of 1984-85, when police overtly confronted and suppressed by force, strikers who were no longer prepared to accept the restraints of mere 'pushing and shoving'" (*The Guardian* 8/5/96). In the run up to '85 organised labour caught the brunt of the police violence earlier meted out to blacks, Irish Republicans, squatters and youth in the inner-cities. The restoration of profits meant the disciplining by force of organised labour.

The next step in the process was the dumping of the cost of welfare back onto the working class by coercing the unemployed into low-paid work (partly to cut back welfare spending, partly to use the low paid as a drag anchor on wages). Hence, the government's New Deal agenda.

Under New Labour more go to jail than ever before (a record 77,300 in 1998), and Jack Straw has been converted to the "morally repugnant" cause of private prisons. As Nick Cohen has noted, "Rather than be tough on the causes of crime, a policy that would necessarily involve the redistribution of wealth, New Labour is jailing more citizens than any government in modern history" (*Cruel Britannia*, Verso 1999). In his detailed and illuminating indictment of US penal policy, *Lockdown America* (Verso 1999), Christian Parenti comments that in the Reagan-Bush-Clinton drive to restore profitability through the disciplining of labour "all alternative avenues of sustenance had to be closed. Thus we had the near... total evisceration of all New Deal and Great Society forms of downward redistribution and working class protections. The great business counter-offensive of the 80s and 90s has helped restore profits, but it has also re-created the perennial problem of how to manage the surplus, excluded and cast-off classes. This then is the mission of the emerging anti-crime police state. As the class structure polarises in the interests of profitability, the state must step in to deploy and justify police terror, increased surveillance and over-use of incarceration. But the politics of punishment works in two ways; it contains and controls those who violate the class-based laws of our society, but prison also produces a predator class that, when returned to the street, frightens and disorganises communities, effectively driving poor and working people into the arms of the state, seeking protection."

Straw's penal policies to date, and Blair's clear intention to pursue the Thatcherite goal of a low-wage, casualised economy at the working class's expense, suggest that what has been carried out to such terrible effect in the USA is what New Labour intends here. There is much talk from New Labour about 'social exclusion.' Exclusion, though, is fundamental to the Blairite agenda. Refusing to tackle – indeed exacerbating – the causes of crime, New Labour has determined to make crime something the poor do only to each other – through increased use of CCTV, stop and search, reduction of public transport, and the concentration of policing in core areas. (The risk of crime for council tenants is now twice the national average.)

The shadow of the Six Counties hangs over all of this. What began with the use of shoot-to-kill to remind a few villains to check their manners concludes with the new Prevention of Terrorism Act which seeks to extend the 'security environment' of the north of Ireland to the British mainland, through a redefinition of 'terrorism' (as "the use of serious violence against persons or property, or the threat to use such violence to intimidate or coerce the government, the public or any section of the public for political, religious or ideological ends") intended to criminalise any and all effective resistance to the agenda of the state.

We can only conclude then that, as the state learns its lessons through the implementation of strategies of repression on the streets of Belfast and Derry and thence their incorporation across the UK, so must we draw our lessons from the resistance of working class communities in the Six Counties to the repressive strategies employed. ■

talking in their sleep

THE CHATTERING CLASSES' FICKLE LOVE AFFAIR WITH DEMOCRACY

Michael Bakunin once observed that "The State, any State – even when it dresses up in the most liberal and democratic form – is necessarily based upon domination, and upon violence, that is, upon despotism – a concealed but no less dangerous despotism" (GP Maximoff, *The Political Philosophy of Bakunin*, Free Press 1953). Usually, the despotic lash is hidden, and we're fed stories of the guarantees of personal liberty embodied in the traditions of parliamentary democracy. We're told that representative politics ensures stability and underwrites freedom.

One of the endlessly recycled stories of romantic fiction is that of the cheating lover who betrays himself through talking in his sleep. Occasionally, the baggage-handlers of the ruling class get caught out in the same way, muttering complacently, and in the process revealing that which is normally concealed. Churchill, for instance, in 1927 said of Mussolini's fascist dictatorship, "Your movement has abroad rendered a service to the whole world... Italy has shown that there is a way to combat subversive forces." We may be reminded also of Lord Chesterfield's reported comment that "arbitrary power" should be introduced "by slow degrees, and as it were, step by step, lest the people see it approach."

Recently, both Lord Lamont and *Guardian* writer Hugo Young have been musing aloud in a manner which suggests their fidelity to their beloved 'democracy' might be open to question. Lamont was asking potential friends of General Pinochet to pledge support for the "ailing dictator". "Remember", he tells them, "General Pinochet's only crime was that he stopped communism in South America." Thousands were killed in Chile following the 1973 overthrow of the elected social-democratic Allende government, and thousands more were tortured. All political opposition to the junta was banned. Books were burned and bodies piled high in football stadiums. So murder and torture are not crimes if done to preserve 'social order'. Clearly, we cannot rush to judgement of such brutality. Who knows when such methods might be needed against the poor here?

So much then for Lamont, a stalwart of the Right. In *The Guardian* on 30 November 1999 we were treated to Hugo Young's thoughts on the Musharraf coup in Pakistan ("Pakistan's Latest Putsch is the Kindest Coup of All"). Democracy, Young tells us, is not an event, but a process. It "does not live by votes alone." Parliamentary democracy, (particularly in Asia and Africa, he is keen to stress) is undermined by "flagrant vote buying, a void in the rule of law." Because the overthrown Sharif government was irredeemably corrupt, so 'democracy' may require a breathing space. Musharraff, for Young, "appears to be better than your average general... He may not yet have made the trains run on time, but he does stop at the lights." Young is a good liberal and does not go so far as to endorse a permanent military dictatorship; "the pressure to make democracy a living truth needs to be unremitting." Sharif was a blatant fraudster whose rule left many amongst the poorest in Pakistan entirely disenchanted with the notion that democracy and 'parliamentary democracy' were one and the same thing. Young knows this full well. He concedes therefore that while "the anti-democrat has no merit... Making people love democracy is the only way to keep them free." Thus an armed dictatorship can come to be the 'least worst' option, if only for now. Better a general committed to making the poor 'love democracy' again (perhaps by making voting compulsory?) than that the poor be allowed to devise forms of democracy of their own.

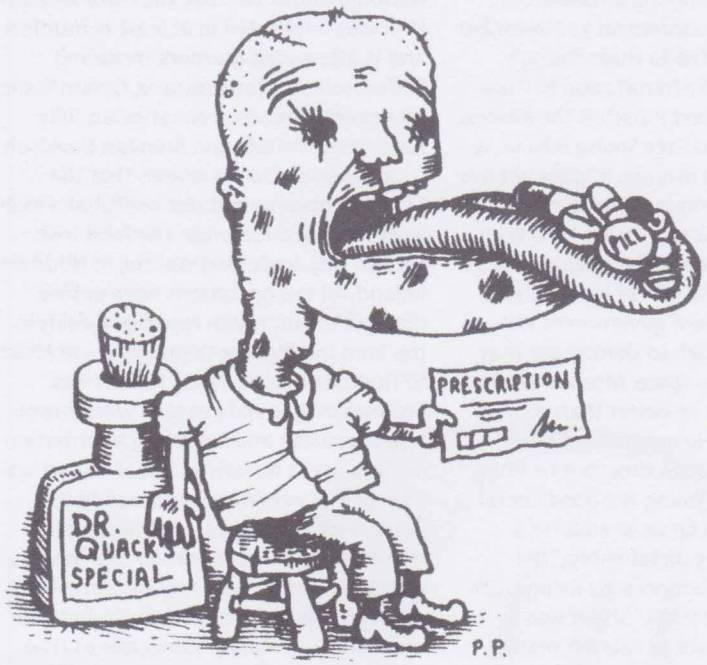
IT'S GOOD TO TALK!

It's good, as we're told, to talk. The 'conditional' democrats who rule over us do more, though, than talk. In February 1998 the British government took out a High Court injunction against former *Daily Mirror* foreign editor, Nicholas Davies, to try and stop publication of his book, *Ten-Thirty-Three*. After a protracted legal fight, the book has now been released by Mainstream Publishing. *Ten-Thirty-Three* was the code number given to Brian Nelson, the chief intelligence officer for the Ulster Defence Association, and also a member of the Force Research Unit (FRU), a hand-picked section of British Military Intelligence set up to target Republicans. Davies' book draws on high-ranking sources within military intelligence to reveal the collusion between the British Army and Loyalist death squads, a collusion sanctioned throughout by the government. Davies reveals how British Army intelligence gave details of nationalist activists to Nelson to facilitate their successful targeting and execution. Using Nelson to direct the UDA, the Force Research Unit was implicated in at least 15 murders and 15 attempted murders, including Belfast solicitor Pat Finucane, Gerard Slane, 66-year-old Francisco Norarintino, Billy Kane, Terry McDaid and Brendan Davidson.

In his book, Davies reveals that the Thatcher government reconstituted a high level security directorate, the Joint Irish Section (JIS), under MI5 control, in Northern Ireland. All FRU operations were passed through the JIS, which reported weekly to the Joint Intelligence Committee – in effect, to Thatcher herself. When Nelson was arrested in 1991 and charged with conspiracy to murder and collecting information likely to assist terrorism, a deal was struck whereby he would be sentenced to ten years, released in 1994, given a complete change of identity, relocation to a house worth £100,000 and a £75,000 lump sum, on condition he keep his mouth shut. The court and press were spun a tale of how the brave Nelson, working to thwart 'UDA murder gangs' had helped save 217 lives through providing information to Military Intelligence. Davies reveals that, since he began writing his book, two of his inside sources have been threatened with 'executive action', as he puts it, "the customary expression for murder".

Unlike most journalists, Davies has been brave enough to seek to expose the machinations of the British State's "dirty war" in the north of Ireland. What the anti-democratic musings of the likes of Lamont and Young reveal, though, is that what was practiced on the streets of Belfast will be transferred to the streets of Manchester or London or wherever required, whenever the 'people' need to be persuaded to 'love democracy' again. Talking in their sleep, our 'democratic' politicians and press show us that, to recall Bakunin again, "...to offend, to oppress, to despoil, to plunder, to assassinate or enslave one's fellow man is ordinarily regarded as a crime. In public life, on the other hand, from the standpoint of patriotism, when these things are done for the greater glory of the State, for the preservation or the extension of its power, it is all transformed into duty and virtue." ■

health wealth & inequality



The link between poverty and ill-health is well documented but a new study shows a direct correlation between income inequality and health – the more equally income is distributed, the healthier the society

According to the *Wealth of the Nation* report published in October, average income in Britain has risen under the Labour Government – but distribution of wealth remains a story of increasing inequalities, particularly evident on a regional basis.

The report, based on four million households nationwide, was first conducted in Summer 1996. This second study, from data collected in 1999 indicates how people have fared under New Labour. The answer is, unsurprisingly, not that well. Nationally, there has been an average rise in income of 9.6% to £21,365. However, some areas in the South and parts of London have seen substantial rises in earnings while others have seen very low growth rates. The Outer Hebrides has even seen a fall in income. The figures do not take inflation into account.

Unsurprisingly the highest average household incomes are in Greater London and the South East. These are the only regions where average household income is ahead of the national average (and income in these regions is 40% higher than the north of England). The wealthiest people in the country are concentrated in London, with those in central London, Blackfriars, Barbican and Belgravia, with average household incomes of £50,000+ skewing the average London-wide.

While some will take the fact that Surrey residents enjoyed an average household income 71% higher than those in Tyne & Wear as an example of a North-South divide, it is obviously a class-divide. By grouping people into regions, the disparities of income within those regions is lost. As Proudhon once said, "there is no such liar as an average."

In 1996, before he came into office, Tony Blair pledged to bring about 'greater equality'. "If the next Labour government has not raised the living standards of the poorest by the end of its time in office it will have failed," he said. In fact the figures show that inequality has increased under Labour.

Health and Inequality

The effects of this wealth inequality are wide-reaching. For example, poor people are more likely to be sick and die at an earlier age, compared to rich people.

Another study, published in December as a book, *The Widening Gap*, indicates that the health gap between rich and poor in Britain is the widest on record and is continuing to grow. The researchers state that increasing inequality in income, lifestyle, educational opportunities and jobs is resulting in thousands of extra deaths in the most deprived inner cities. The death rate among people under 65 is now more than two-and-a-half times higher in the worst parts of Glasgow than in the prosperous Southern communities of Esher and Wokingham.

The book highlights the fundamental role of poverty in creating and maintaining the health gap. The health gap mirrors gaps in income, education and employment levels. The average household income in Springburn, Glasgow, is £13,697 compared with £24,490 in Wokingham, Berkshire. Unsurprisingly, chronic illness and infant mortality are higher in Springburn. The researchers say the gap between rich and poor has widened faster in Britain and that levels of poverty are higher than in much of Europe. Life expectancy for professional men is now 9.5 years more than for male unskilled

manual workers. For women it is 6.4 years more. Inequality of power and wealth kills.

Previous research also indicates that the degree of inequality is important (ie. the size of the gap between rich and poor). According to an editorial in the *British Medical Journal* "what matters in determining mortality and health in a society is less the overall wealth of that society and more how evenly wealth is distributed. The more equally wealth is distributed the better the health of that society." [Vol. 312, April 20, 1996, p. 985] In other words, absolute levels of wealth are less important than relative levels. Health is a product of social life and increasing inequality in wealth leads to increasing inequality in health.

Research in the USA found overwhelming evidence of this. George Kaplan and his colleagues measured inequality in the 50 US states and compared it to the age-adjusted death rate for all causes of death, and a pattern emerged: the more unequal the distribution of income, the greater the death rate. ["Inequality in income and mortality in the United States: analysis of mortality and potential pathways," *British Medical Journal* Vol. 312, pp. 999-1003]

This measure of income inequality was tested against other social conditions besides health. States with greater inequality in income distribution also had higher rates of unemployment and incarceration, a higher percentage of people receiving income assistance and food stamps, a greater percentage of people without medical insurance, greater proportion of babies born with low birth weight, higher murder rates, higher rates of violent crime, higher costs per-person for medical care and police 'protection'. Moreover states with greater inequality of income distribution also spent less per person on education, had fewer books per person in the schools, and had poorer educational performance.

As the gap grows between rich and poor (indicating an increase in social hierarchy within and outside workplaces) the health of a people deteriorates and the social fabric unravels. Being at the bottom of the social ladder has psychological effects in addition to the hardships of substandard housing, nutrition, air quality, recreational opportunities, and medical care enjoyed by the poor (see George Davey Smith, "Income inequality and mortality: why are they related?" *British Medical Journal*, Vol. 312, pp. 987-988).

Redistribution or Revolution?

All this is not to suggest that those at the bottom of hierarchies are passive victims (as middle class reformers like to think) – far from it. Those at the bottom are constantly resisting the negative effects of hierarchy and creating non-hierarchical ways of living and fighting. This constant process of self-activity and self-liberation can be seen from the labour, women's and other movements – in which, to some degree, people create their own alternatives based upon their own dreams and hopes. Anarchism is based upon, and grew out of, this process of resistance, hope and direct action. It is these movements which will ultimately solve the social problem and create a society based on liberty, equality and solidarity (and good health for all!).

The growing gap between rich and poor has not been ordained by god, nature or some other superhuman force. It has been created by a specific social system, its institutions and workings – a system based upon authoritarian social relationships which effect us both physically and mentally. This social system itself has, in the past, reduced inequality. In the 1960s and 1970s the gap narrowed. "Just as a gap can widen so it can narrow," the authors of *The Widening Gap* argue but "the trends of growing inequality show no sign of abating and the consequences of such a widening gap are dire." Anarchists would agree. However, ultimately, as the experience of the 1980s show, reforms can be destroyed and undermined. Without a 'redistribution' of power along with the wealth any reform can be reversed. Only when we finally abolish capitalism and the state that protects it, can equality be achieved so that people are no longer subjected to the exploitation that shortens their lives.

The authors of *The Widening Gap* also argue that it is their "firm belief that if health inequalities... are to be reduced, as is the stated aim of the Government, then policies which actively address the reduction of poverty and of inequality through redistribution [of income and wealth] must be pursued." They add: "The costs would be borne by the rich." However, the logic of 'redistribution' fails to understand that we, the working class, create the wealth that accumulates in the hands of the few. We are not 'redistributing' wealth – we are returning it to its rightful owners! Rather than redistribute wealth we should be ensuring that it never leaves our hands to begin with. And that requires a 'redistribution' of power – that is, the creation of a culture of resistance that wins reforms by self-managed organisation, direct action and solidarity on the way to creating a new world. ■

@narcho-quiz

1. **Where might you pay for something with 'rain'?**
2. **Well-meaning conservationists cut off the horns of rhinos in Zimbabwe to stop them being poached for their horn. What happened to the rhinos?**
3. **What do Chinese Anarchists and animal rights activists have in common?**
4. **Whose manifesto argues that revolutionaries should "acquire political power"?**
5. **Which science fiction author described the space-faring society he wrote about as "externally anarchist, internally socialist"?**

[Answers on page 27]

THE MURMURING VOLCANO

The neo-liberal model that has been so enthusiastically adopted in many parts of Latin America is designed to make the poor pay – with higher prices, lower wages and increased social costs. The underlying causes of the economic crisis in the country lie in the country's corrupt and fragmented political classes.

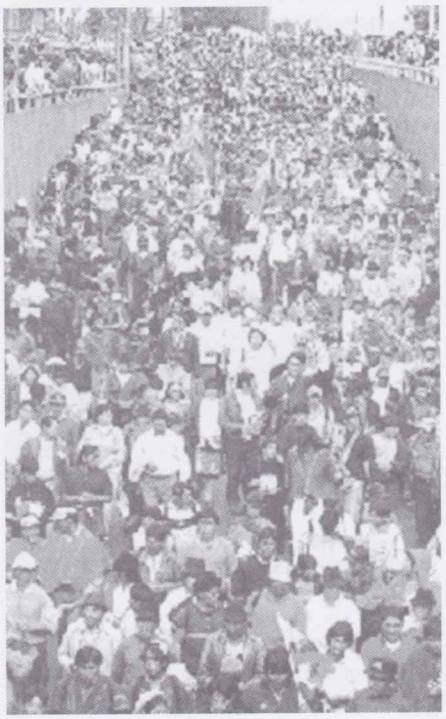
The government of Jamil Mahuad was inaugurated in August 1998. His predecessor, Alarcón, was arrested for corruption. He in turn had replaced Abdala Bucaram, called 'El Loco', who fled the country after people surrounded the Presidential Palace. The political classes, such as the financial and export elites of Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest city, are so neo-liberal in outlook they have been criticised by the IMF! Among other things, they got income tax abolished and have rigged bailouts for a series of banking scandals, all of which they have profited from.

Ecuador is heavily reliant on oil and banana exports and the national currency, the sucre, has long been prone to hyper-inflation. Mahuad's solution has been to try to pass the costs onto the poor. In 1999, an attempt was made to increase gasoline prices, which prompted widespread strikes and blockades by taxi and bus drivers, until the price hike was removed.

In October, the crisis deepened and the country suffered two volcanic eruptions, Pichincha near the capital, Quito, and Tungaragua, which caused the resort town of Baños to be evacuated.

In January this year, Mahuad answered the deepening crisis by freezing bank accounts, announcing the privatisation of the oil fields and decreed that the US dollar would be the nation's currency. This 'dollarisation' did not just mean the end of the sucre, but increased spoils for the rich who could speculate in dollars. This measure was immediately met with calls for a uprising by the main Indian organisation, CONAIE (Confederation of Indigenous Nationalities of Ecuador) on 15 January.

CONAIE launched an 'Indian and Popular Parliament', going for a conscious strategy of dual power, with talk of forming a Council for National Salvation. The oil workers and students struck.



Ecuador's history is perhaps not as turbulent as its neighbours, but it shares with them a common heritage of the exploitation of its people and resources and resistance to oppression

A long-term resistance struggle was planned. As CONAIE's vice-president, Ulcuango, noted, if they resisted 500 years of oppression they can very well resist several months more. Their goal is a new economic and political order, far from neo-liberalism and based on the Parliament of the Peoples of Ecuador. By 20 January, between 20 and 30 thousand Indians were in Quito. The Indians managed to assemble outside the National Congress but were dispersed by the police and army, using tear gas.

CONAIE appealed to the army, many of whom are Indians themselves, to support them. An offer to negotiate with Mahuad was rejected, as they didn't recognise his legitimacy. The Parliament of the Peoples of Ecuador demands included the suspension of the state of emergency, the abandonment of 'dollarisation', the resignation of Mahuad, actions against corruption, a freeze on public transport fares and the restoration of a Council for National Salvation. Though not demands an anarchist would make, they were designed to appeal to the majority of the Indians and the urban poor. The Ecuadorian Constitution allows for the people assuming such powers when the authorities are incompetent and act against the national interest.

There were riots in other cities and troops took over an oil refinery in Esmereldas that had been occupied by striking workers. In the province of Chimborazo, 50,000 Indians blocked the Pan-American Highway. In a desperate attempt to backpedal, Mahuad announced a pay rise for private company employees from $47 to $60 a month. But as the basic cost of living for a family in Ecuador is $200 a month, this was an insult.

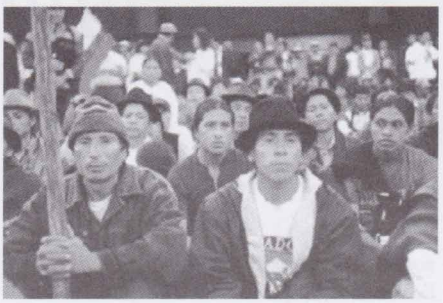
On Friday 21 January, the Indians took over the Congress backed by junior and middle-ranking officers. They established a provisional government, the Council for National Salvation, headed by Colonel Lucio Gutierrez, with the President of CONAIE, Antonio Vargas, and Carlos Solerzano, formerly of the Court of Justice.

The official military leader, General Carlos Mendoza, arrested Gutierrez, and forced Mahuad to resign. Vice-President Noboa was initiated as President, pledging the same policies. The faces changed, but the economic misery remained.

The indigenas tried to continue the uprising in Quito, but lacking the support of the army, they decided to leave the city. They were evicted from the Peoples Parliament by the army, which officially dissolved it. According to Ecuadorians United in Montréal, Canada, General Jaime del Castillo led 400 soldiers to massacre the Indians at El Arbolito in Quito, but fortunately the soldiers refused to obey. The indigenas said that they would watch the new government and the

struggle would continue. The new government started to purge the military and arrest prominent leftists, Indian leaders and people from the Co-ordination of Social Movements.

While not as libertarian in character as some other indigenous movements in Latin America, CONAIE has several tendencies, explained here by an activist at an alternative news agency in Quito.



"Not all the indigenous people are for a change of government, the big capitalists among them, for example, who are large exporters of handcrafts. They are happy with the idea of dollarization and with the idea of neo-liberalism.

And so, within the organized indigenous movement there are various factions. [O]ne that holds the indigenous position... excludes anyone who is not indigenous. They are purists and call for the return of Tahuantinsuyo [the Inca Empire]... The Democratic Faction for a New Ecuador is the most structured politically and has the great majority. The various uprisings and taking over the main churches has been their work. Theirs is the design for the Parliament [and] the proposed reforms.

The bad thing about this faction is that when they allied themselves with the democratic party line, they lost 40% of what they had gained before. They formed the Pachakutik movement and let themselves become taken in by the siren song of 'democracy', though it seems, luckily, that they are beginning to resist. Nowadays they are saying that they have shown that with the current democracy the people have no alternatives, so a takeover of power is the only solution.

The utilitarian position includes those who are selling the indigenous movement as a mendicant movement, those who ask you for money at every turn, even for the air they breathe... This faction is into the world of NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations).

They talk of a New Plurinational and Democratic State in order to make room for all the anti-neo-liberal factions that don't want to be classified as orthodox or leftist. The idea is to attract the small and medium-sized producers, who have been seriously hurt and who have recently played a significant part in the development of the national economy. There is nothing to discuss with big business.

We're not thinking about an autarchy, nor in the total destruction of what is in the country in order to start all over again, an idea that is not acceptable. It is believed that the middle and lower class sectors of society can foster a new Ecuador.

Politics by alliance should be this way. Remember that the movement of the indigenous and rural people is not one of armed conflict but it is political and this is the world of ideas. For this reason, proposals are accompanied by protests."

Though their immediate aim of a more popular government was thwarted, the uprising is not over and the indigenas are discussing new strategies. The local and regional plenaries remain, and already one in Quito has demanded the release of the detainees and repeated the demands of the Peoples' Parliament. ■

⇢ *For updates see the following websites: www.ainfos.ca or www.amarc.org/pulsar – which has the most up-to-date, reliable information in Spanish.*

@narcho-quiz answers

1. **Botswana. The currency is the 'pula', which means rain in Setswana. It is divided into 100 'thebe', or raindrops. Botswana is 80% arid savannah.**

2. **Of the 90 rhino poached, 84 had been dehorned. The Asian buyers for rhino horn told the poachers to shoot all the rhinos, with or without horns, because as soon as the animals become extinct, the value of their stockpile will become priceless.**

3. **Tofu. After 1906, there were two principal currents of Chinese Anarchists abroad, one based in Tokyo and another in Paris. The Paris-based anarchists financed their activities in part through ownership of a tofu factory.**

4. **The Unabomber's. He states (in paragraph 194) that "Probably the revolutionaries should even avoid assuming political power, whether by legal or illegal means, until the industrial system is stressed to the danger point and has proved itself to be a failure in the eyes of most people... until the system has gotten itself into such a mess that any hardships will be seen as resulting from the failures of the industrial system itself and not from the policies of the revolutionaries." Needless to say, this advocacy of government and the taking of political power by revolutionaries has not stopped him being called an anarchist by the media (and some primitivists).**

5. **Iain M Banks, describing 'the Culture' in his series of science fiction books which began with *Consider Phlebas*.**

Technology, Capitalism and Anarchism

New Year's Day came and went but, against the promises of the primitivists, despite Tony Allen's paranoiac hype and the hopes of us all, all systems failed to crash. No matter, maybe technology isn't so bad after all.

Technology has an obvious effect on individual freedom; in some ways increasing it, in others restricting it. However, since capitalism is a social system based on inequalities of power, it is a truism that technology will reflect those inequalities, as it does not develop in a social vacuum.

No technology evolves unless there are people who benefit from it and have sufficient means to disseminate it. In a capitalist society, technologies useful to the rich and powerful are generally the ones that spread. This can be seen from industry, where technology has been implemented specifically to de-skill the worker, so replacing the skilled, valued craftsperson with the easily trained (and eliminated) 'mass worker.' By trying to make any individual worker dispensable, the capitalist hopes to deprive workers of a means of controlling the relation between their effort on the job and the pay they receive. In Proudhon's words, the "machine, or the workshop, after having degraded the labourer by giving him a master, completes his degeneracy by reducing him from the rank of artisan to that of common workman." [1]

So, unsurprisingly, technology within a hierarchical society will tend to reinforce hierarchy and domination. Managers/capitalists will select technology that will protect and extend their power (and profits). Thus, while it is often claimed that technology is 'neutral' this is not (and can never be) the case. Simply put, 'progress' within a hierarchical system will reflect the power structures of that system ("technology is political," to use David Noble's expression, it does not evolve in isolation from human beings and the social relationships and power structures between them).

As George Reitzer notes, technological innovation under a hierarchical system soon results in "increased control and the replacement of human with non-human technology. In fact, the replacement of human with non-human technology is very often motivated by a desire for greater control, which of course is motivated by the need for profit-maximisation. The great sources of uncertainty and unpredictability in any rationalising system are people... McDonaldisation involves the search for the means to exert increasing control over both employees and customers." [2] For Reitzer, capitalism is marked by the "irrationality of rationality," in which this process of control results in a system based on crushing the individuality and humanity of those who live within it.

"The insubordination of our workmen has given us the idea of dispensing with them. We have made and stimulated every imaginable effort to replace the service of men by tools more docile, and we have achieved our object. Machinery has delivered capital from the oppression of labour"

In this process of controlling employees to maximise profit, de-skilling comes about because skilled labour is more expensive than unskilled or semi-skilled, and skilled workers have more power over their working conditions due to the difficulty in replacing them. In addition it is easier to 'rationalise' the production process with methods like Taylorism, a system of strict production schedules based on the amount of time (as determined by management) that workers 'need' to perform various operations in the workplace, thus requiring simple, easily analysed and timed movements. And as companies are in competition, each has to copy the most 'efficient' (ie. profit maximising) production in order to remain profitable, no matter how dehumanising this may be for workers. Thus the effects of the division of labour and de-skilling becoming widespread. Instead of managing their own work, workers are turned into human machines in a labour process they do not control; instead being controlled by those who own the machines they use. [3]

As Max Stirner noted (echoing Adam Smith), this process of de-skilling and controlling work means that "When everyone is to cultivate himself into man, condemning a man to machine-like labour amounts to the same thing as slavery... Every labour is to have the intent that the man be satisfied. Therefore he must become a master in it too, be able to perform it as a totality. He who in a pin-factory only puts on heads, only draws the wire, works, as it were mechanically, like a machine; he remains half-trained, does not become a master: his labour cannot satisfy him, it can only fatigue him. His labour is nothing by itself, has no object in itself, is nothing complete in itself; he labours only into another's hands, and is used (exploited) by this other." [4] Kropotkin makes a similar argument against the division of labour ("machine-like labour") in *The Conquest of Bread*. [5]

Modern industry is set up to ensure that workers do not become 'masters' of their work but instead follow the orders

of management. The evolution of technology lies in the relations of power within society. This is because "the viability of a design is not simply a technical or even economic evaluation but a political one. A technology is deemed viable if it conforms to the existing relations of power." [6]

This process of controlling, restricting, and de-individualising labour is a key feature of capitalism. Work that is skilled and controlled by workers is empowering to them in two ways. Firstly it gives them pride in their work and themselves. Secondly, it makes it harder to replace them or suck profits out of them. Therefore, in order to remove the 'subjective' factor (ie. individuality and worker control) from the work process, capital needs methods of controlling the workforce to prevent workers from asserting their individuality, thus preventing them from arranging their own lives and work and resisting the authority of the bosses. This need to control workers can be seen from the type of machinery introduced during the Industrial Revolution. According to Andrew Ure, a consultant for the factory owners, "[i]n the factories for spinning coarse yarn... the mule-spinners [skilled workers] have abused their powers beyond endurance, domineering in the most arrogant manner... over their masters. High wages... have, in too many cases, cherished pride and supplied funds for supporting refractory spirits in strikes... During a disastrous turmoil of [this] kind... several capitalists... had recourse to the celebrated machinists... of Manchester... [to construct] a self-acting mule... This invention confirms the great doctrine already propounded, that when capital enlists science in her service, the refractory hand of labour will always be taught docility." [7]

Why is it necessary for workers to be "taught docility"? Because "[b]y the infirmity of human nature, it happens that the more skillful the workman, the more self-willed and intractable he is apt to become, and of course the less fit a component of mechanical system in which... he may do great damage to the whole." [8] Proudhon quotes an English manufacturer who argues the same point: "The insubordination of our workmen has given us the idea of dispensing with them. We have made and stimulated every imaginable effort to replace the service of men by tools more docile, and we have achieved our object. Machinery has delivered capital from the oppression of labour." [9] As David Noble summarises, during the Industrial Revolution "Capital invested in machines that would reinforce the system of domination [in the workplace], and this decision to invest, which might in the long run render the chosen technique economical, was not itself an economical decision but a political one, with cultural sanction." [10]

A similar process was at work in the US, where the rise in trade unionism resulted in "industrial managers be-[coming] even more insistent that skill and initiative not be left on the shop-floor, and that, by the same token, shop-floor workers not have control over the reproduction of relevant skills through craft-regulated apprenticeship training. Fearful that skilled shop-floor workers would use their scarce resources to reduce their effort and increase their pay, management deemed that knowledge of the shop-floor process must reside with the managerial structure." [11]

American managers happily embraced Taylorism, whereby the task of the manager was to gather all available knowledge about the work he oversaw and reorganise it. Taylor himself considered the task for workers was "to do what they are told to do promptly and without asking questions or making suggestions." [12] Taylor also relied exclusively upon incentive-pay schemes which mechanically linked pay to productivity and had no appreciation of the subtleties of psychology or sociology (which would have told him that enjoyment of work and creativity is as important for people as higher pay). Unsurprisingly, workers responded to his schemes by insubordination, sabotage and strikes and it was "discovered... that the 'time and motion' experts frequently knew very little about the proper work activities under their supervision, that often they simply guessed at the optimum rates for given operations... it meant that the arbitrary authority of management has simply been reintroduced in a less apparent form." [13]

Katherine Stone also argues (in her account of *The Origins of Job Structure in the Steel Industry in America*) that the "transfer of skill [from the worker to management] was not a response to the necessities of production, but was, rather, a strategy to rob workers of their power" by "tak[ing] knowledge and authority from the skilled workers and creating a management cadre able to direct production." Stone highlights that this de-skilling process was combined with a 'divide and rule' policy by management by wage incentives and new promotion policies. This created a reward system in which workers who played by the rules would receive concrete gains in terms of income and status. Over time, such a structure would come to be seen as "the natural way to organise work and one which offered them personal advancement" even though, "when the system was set up, it was neither obvious nor rational. The job ladders were created just when the skill requirements for jobs in the industry were diminishing as a result of the new technology, and jobs were becoming more and more equal as to the learning time and responsibility involved." The modern structure of the capitalist workplace was created to break workers' resistance to capitalist authority and was deliberately "aimed at altering workers' ways of thinking and feeling – which they did by making workers' individual 'objective' self-interests congruent with that of the employers' and in conflict with workers' collective self-interest." It was a means of "labour discipline" and of "motivating workers to work for the employers' gain and preventing workers from uniting to take back control of production." Stone notes that the "development of the new labour system in the steel industry was repeated throughout the economy in different industries. As in the steel industry, the core of these new labour systems were the creation of artificial job hierarchies and the transfer of skills from workers to the managers." [14]

For capital, the source of problems in industry is people. Unlike machines, people can think, feel, dream, hope and act

This process was recognised by libertarians at the time, with the IWW, for example, arguing that "[l]abourers are no longer classified by difference in trade skill, but the employer assigns them according to the machine which they are attached. These divisions, far from representing differences in skill or interests among the labourers, are imposed by the employers that workers may be pitted against one another and spurred to greater exertion in the shop, and that all resistance to capitalist tyranny may be weakened by artificial distinctions." [15] Anarchists and syndicalists argued for, and built, industrial unions – one union per workplace and industry – in order to combat these divisions and effectively resist capitalist tyranny.

Needless to say, such management schemes never last in the long run nor totally work in the short run either – which explains why hierarchical management continues, as does technological de-skilling. Workers always find ways of using new technology to increase their power within the workplace and so undermine management decisions to their own advantage.

This process of de-skilling workers ↪

←● was complemented by many factors – state protected markets (in the form of tariffs and government orders – the "lead in technological innovation came in armaments, where assured government orders justified high fixed-cost investments"); the use of "both political and economic power [by American capitalists] to eradicate and diffuse workers' attempts to assert shop-floor control"; and "repression, instigated and financed both privately and publicly, to eliminate radical elements in the American labour movement." [16] Thus state action played a key role in destroying craft control within industry, along with the large financial resources of capitalists compared to workers.

The worker "will only respect machinery in the day when it becomes his friend, shortening his work, rather than as today, his enemy, taking away jobs..."

Bringing this sorry story up to date, we find "many, if not most, American managers are reluctant to develop skills [and initiative] on the shop-floor for the fear of losing control of the flow of work." [17] Given that there is a division of knowledge in society (and, obviously, in the workplace as well) this means that capitalism has elected to introduce a management and technology mix which leads to inefficiency and waste of valuable knowledge, experience and skills.

Thus the capitalist workplace is both produced by and is a weapon in the class struggle and reflects the shifting power relations between workers and employers. The creation of artificial job hierarchies, the transfer of skills away from workers to managers and technological development are all products of class struggle. Technological progress and workplace organisation within capitalism have little to do with 'efficiency' and far more to do with profits and power.

This means that while self-management has consistently proven to be more efficient (and empowering) than hierarchical management structures, capitalism actively selects against it. This is because capitalism is motivated purely by increasing profits, and the maximisation of profits is best done by disempowering workers – even though this concentration of power harms efficiency by distorting and restricting information flow and the gathering and use of widely distributed knowledge within the firm.

Thus the last refuge of the capitalist/technophile (namely that the productivity gains of technology outweigh the human costs or the means used to achieve them) is doubly flawed. Firstly, disempowering technology may maximise profits, but it need not increase efficient utilisation of resources or workers' time, skills or potential (efficiency and profit maximisation are two different things, with such de-skilling and management control actually reducing efficiency but as it allows managers to maximise profits the capitalist market selects it). Secondly, "when investment does in fact generate innovation, does such innovation yield greater productivity?... After conducting a poll of industry executives on trends in automation, *Business Week* concluded in 1982 that 'there is a heavy backing for capital investment in a variety of labour-saving technologies that are designed to fatten profits without necessary adding to productive output.'" David Noble concludes that "whenever managers are able to use automation to 'fatten profits' and enhance their authority (by eliminating jobs and extorting concessions and obedience from the workers who remain) without at the same time increasing social product, they appear more than ready to do." [18]

Of course the claim is that higher wages follow increased investment and technological innovation ('in the long run' – although usually 'the long run' has to be helped to arrive by workers' struggle and protest!). Passing aside the question of whether slightly increased consumption really makes up for dehumanising and uncreative work, we must note that it is usually the capitalist who really benefits from technological change in money terms. For example, the results of Taylor's first experiment in his ideas indicate this well. Taylor's theory was that when workers controlled their own work, they did not produce to the degree wanted by management. His solution was simple. The job of management was to discover the 'one best way' of doing a specific work task and then ensure that workers followed these (management defined) working practices. In other words, eliminate workers' control in favour of bosses control. The result of his first experiment was a 360% increase in productivity for a 60% increase in wages. Very 'efficient.'

In the wider economy, similar processes are at work. Between 1920 and 1927 (a period when unemployment caused by technology became commonplace) the automobile industry (which was at the forefront of technological change) saw wages rise by 23.7%. Thus, claim supporters of capitalism, technology is in all our interests. However, capital surpluses rose by 192.9% during the same period – eight times faster! Similarly, over the last 20 years the USA and many other countries have seen companies 'downsizing' and 'right-sizing' their workforce and introducing new technologies. The result? While wages have stagnated, profits have been increasing as productivity rises and the rich have been getting richer – technology yet again showing whose side it is on. As David Noble notes (with regards to manufacturing): "US Manufacturing industry over the last thirty years... [has seen] the value of capital stock (machinery) relative to labour double, reflecting the trend towards mechanisation and automation. As a consequence... the absolute output person hour increased 115%, more than double. But during this same period, real earnings for hourly workers... rose only 84%, less than double. Thus, after three decades of automation-based progress, workers are now earning less relative to their output than before. That is, they are producing more for less; working more for their boss and less for themselves." [19]

Noble continues: "For if the impact of automation on workers has not been ambiguous, neither has the impact on management and those it serves – labour's loss has been their gain. During the same first thirty years of our age of automation, corporate after tax profits have increased 450%, more than five times the increase in real earnings for workers." [20]

But why? Because labour has the ability to produce a flexible amount of output (use value) for a given wage. Unlike coal or steel, a worker can be made to work more intensely during a given working period and so technology can be utilised to maximise that effort as well as increasing the pool of potential replacements for an employee by de-skilling their work (so reducing workers' power to get higher wages for their work). Thus technology is a key way of increasing the power of the boss, which in turn can increase output per worker while ensuring that the workers' receive relatively less of that output back in terms of wages – "Machines," argued Proudhon, "promised us an increase of wealth, they have kept their word, but at the same time endowing us with an increase of poverty. They promised us liberty... [but] have brought us slavery." [21]

But technological progress does not imply that we are victims. Far from it, much innovation is the direct result of our resistance to hierarchy and its tools. For example, capitalists turned to Taylorism and "scientific management" in response to the power of skilled craft workers to control their work and working environ-

ment (the famous 1892 Homestead strike, for example, was a direct product of the desire of the company to end the skilled workers' control and power on the shop-floor). In response to this, factory and other workers created a whole new structure of working class power – a new kind of unionism based on the industrial level. This can be seen in many different countries. For example, in Spain, the CNT adopted the sindicato unico (one union) in 1918 which united all workers of the same workplace in the same union. In the USA, the 1930s saw a massive and militant union organising drive by the CIO, based on industrial unionism and collective bargaining (inspired, in part, by the example of the IWW and its broad organisation of unskilled workers). Thus technology and its (ab)uses is very much a product of the class struggle.

the "conscious transformation of technology will... be a central task of a society of free workers"

With any given technology, workers and radicals soon learn to use it to resist their bosses and the state (which necessitates a transformation of technology again, to try and give the bosses an upper hand!) The use of the internet, for example, to organise, spread and co-ordinate information, resistance and struggles is a classic example of this process (see Jason Wehling, "'Netwars' and Activists' Power on the Internet", *Scottish Anarchist* No. 2 for details). There is always a 'guerrilla war' associated with technology, with workers and radicals developing their own tactics to gain counter control for themselves. Thus much technological change reflects our power and activity to change our own lives and working conditions.

While some may dismiss our analysis as 'Luddite,' to do so is make 'technology' an idol to be worshipped rather than something to be critically analysed. Moreover, it is to misrepresent the ideas of the Luddites themselves – they never actually opposed all technology or machinery; rather, they opposed "all Machinery hurtful to Commonality" (as a March 1812 letter to a hated manufacturer put it). Rather than worship technological progress (or view it uncritically), the Luddites subjected technology to critical analysis and evaluation. They opposed those forms of machinery that harmed themselves or society. Unlike those who smear others as 'Luddites,' the labourers who broke machines were not intimidated by the modern notion of progress. Their sense of right and wrong was not clouded by the belief that technology was somehow inevitable or neutral. They did not think that human values (or their own interests) were irrelevant in evaluating the benefits and drawbacks of a given technology and its effects on workers and society as a whole. Nor did they consider their skills and livelihood as less important than the profits and power of the capitalists. In other words, they would have agreed with Proudhon's comment that machinery "plays the leading role in industry, man is secondary" and they acted to change this relationship. [22] Indeed, it would be tempting to argue that worshippers of technological progress are, in effect, urging us not to think and to sacrifice ourselves to a new abstraction like the state or capital. The Luddites were an example of working people deciding what their interests were and acting to defend them by their own direct action – in this case opposing technology which benefited the ruling class by giving them an edge in the class struggle. Anarchists follow this critical approach to technology, recognising that it is not neutral nor above criticism.

For capital, the source of problems in industry is people. Unlike machines, people can think, feel, dream, hope and act. The 'evolution' of technology will, therefore, reflect the class struggle within society and the struggle for liberty against the forces of authority. Technology, far from being neutral, reflects the interests of those with power. Technology will only be truly a universal resource once we control it ourselves and modify it to reflect human values (this may mean that some forms of technology will have to be written off and replaced by new forms in a free society). Until that happens, most technological processes – regardless of the other advantages they may have – will be used to exploit and control people. Hence French syndicalist Emile Pouget's argument that the worker "will only respect machinery the day when it becomes his friend, shortening his work, rather than as today, his enemy, taking away jobs, killing workers." [23] Or Proudhon's comments that "in the present condition of society, the workshop with its hierarchical organisation, and machinery" could only serve "exclusively the interests of the least numerous, the least industrious, and the wealthiest class" rather than "be employed for the benefit of all." [24]

While resisting technological 'progress' (by means up to and including machine breaking) is essential in the here and now, the issue of technology can only be truly solved when those who use a given technology control its development, introduction and use. Destroying modern technology would be, potentially, disastrous. As Bakunin pointed out, "to destroy... all the instruments of labour [ie. technology]... would be to condemn all humanity – which is infinitely too numerous today to exist... on the simple gifts of nature... to... death by starvation." [25] Little wonder, therefore, that anarchists consider workers' self-management as a key means of solving the problems created by technology. Proudhon, for example, argued that the solution to the problems created by the division of labour and technology could only be solved by 'association' and "by a broad education, by the obligation of apprenticeship, and by the co-operation of all who take part in the collective work." This would ensure that "the division of labour can no longer be a cause of degradation for the workman [or workwoman]." [26] Only when workers "obtain... collective property in capital" and capital (and so technology) is no longer "concentrated in the hands of a separate, exploiting class" will they be able "to smash the tyranny of capital." [27] This would allow the transformation of current technologies (and the elimination of the harmful ones) and the creation of liberatory technologies.

While as far as technology goes, it may not be enough to get rid of the boss, this is a necessary first step in creating a technology which enhances freedom rather than controlling and shaping the worker (or user in general) and enhancing the power and profits of the capitalist. In the words of Cornelius Castoriadais, the "conscious transformation of technology will... be a central task of a society of free workers." [28] ■

Notes

1 *System of Economical Contradictions*, p. 202, PJ Proudhon
2 George Reitzer, *The McDonaldisation of Society*, p. 100
3 see also Harry Braverman, 'Labour and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century', *Monthly Review Press*, 1974
4 *The Ego and Its Own*, p. 121, Max Stirner
5 see chapter XV – 'The Division of Labour' as did Proudhon (see chapters III & IV of *System of Economical Contradictions*)
6 David Noble, *Progress without People*, p. 63
7 Andrew Ure, *Philosophy of Manufactures*, pp. 336-368 – quoted by Noble, Op. Cit., p. 125
8 Ibid
9 *System of Economical Contradictions*, p. 189
10 Op. Cit., p. 6
11 William Lazonick, *Organisation and Technology in Capitalist Development*, p. 273
12 quoted by David Noble, *American By Design*, p. 268
13 David Noble, Op. Cit., p. 272
14 Root & Branch (ed.), *Root and Branch: The Rise of the Workers' Movements*, pp. 152-5
15 quoted by Katherine Stone, Op. Cit., p. 157
16 William Lazonick, *Competitive Advantage on the Shop-Floor*, p. 218, p. 303
17 William Lazonick, *Organisation and Technology in Capitalist Development*, pp. 279-280
18 David Noble, *Progress Without People*, pp. 86-87 and p. 89
19 Op. Cit., pp. 92-3
20 Op. Cit., p. 95
21 Proudhon, Op. Cit., p. 199
22 Op. Cit., p. 204
23 quoted by David Noble, Op. Cit., p. 15
24 Proudhon, Op. Cit., p. 205
25 *The Basic Bakunin*, p. 90-1
26 *The General Idea of the Revolution*, p. 223
27 Michael Bakunin, Op. Cit., pp. 90-1
28 *Workers' Councils and the Economics of a Self-Managed Society*, p. 13

P|R|I|S|O|N|E|R|S

"I DO NOT PRETEND TO BE THE GOOD GUY" GREEK ANARCHIST GETS 15 YEARS

Nikos Maziotis has been convicted of attempting to cause an explosion and possession of arms and explosives. He was sentenced to 15 years for putting a bomb in the Ministry of Industry & Development in 1997, in solidarity with the revolt of the villages in Strymonikos against the installation of a gold mine by multinational company, TVX Gold. Nikos had personally claimed responsibility for the bomb and set out openly in the press his motives for this. [See *Black Flag* 215]. Again in court he turned the hearing into an exposition of revolutionary anarchism.

"First, I do not pretend to be the good guy here where I was forced to come. I will not plead for anything, because I do not consider myself a criminal. I am a revolutionary. I have nothing to repent of. I am proud of what I have done. The only thing I regret is the technical error that was made.

You must have in mind that although you are judges and sitting higher than me, many times the revolutionaries, and myself specifically, have judged you long before you judge me.

This authoritarian structure penetrates the whole of society and it is this structure that we want to destroy. Either with peaceful or with violent means, even with guns. I have no problem with that. Our purpose, within the anti-state and anti-capitalist struggle, is to connect ourselves with different social struggles. Our purpose also when intervening in these struggles is to attempt to make things reach the edge.

Now let's talk about the struggle of the people in Strymonikos. Long before I planted the bomb, other comrades were in the villages, they were talking with the people there. I was inspired to plant this bomb for a specific reason: The people of the villages had broken the limits, by themselves. If it had been a struggle within an institutional framework, in the way that trade unions and local administrations try to keep these struggles restricted, if it had been confined in a mild, harmless and not dangerous protest, maybe I wouldn't have done anything. But the comrades up there in the villages – who are not anarchists of course, but I don't care about that, they are citizens who also want their freedom – had surpassed every limit. They had conflicts with the police three times, on 17 October 1996, on 25 July 1997 and on 9 November 1998, they had set fire to police cars and vans of the riot police, they had burnt machinery belonging to TVX, they had invaded the mines of Olympiada and destroyed equipment. In the night, some of them were going out with shotguns, shooting in the air to frighten the policemen.

And I thought, these people are cool, they've gone even further than us. And then repression followed, especially in '97 when martial law was imposed in the area. The Chief of Police in Halkidiki gave an order forbidding all gatherings and demonstrations. They also sent special police units and tanks, which came on to the streets for the first time since 1980. Now they were sending them out again there, in the

villages of Halkidiki. So, I thought, we must do something here, in Athens. It is not possible that the others are under repression and we here stay passive. The Ministry of Industry & Development, was central to this case. The struggle in Strymonikos was a struggle against 'development', against 'modernisation'.

So, I planted a bomb. The purpose was what I said in the letter in which I took responsibility for the action... a message to the people of Strymonikos that you are not alone, there are also others who may live 600 km away from you but they care.

I sent my message. I was caught, because I made that technical error and I left a fingerprint, but even if there was no material damage at all the message was sent. And you received it, the state received it, but also the people of Strymonikos received it. I know that they are saying I am one of them, even if they have never met me. There is nothing better than that."

⇢ *The full text of Nikos' statement can be found on the A-Infos website (www.tao.ca/ainfos), or from Black Flag.*

RON EASTERBROOK ON HUNGER STRIKE

Ron Easterbrook is 69 years-old and serving a life sentence for defending himself against a police ambush (see 'Shooting to Kill' article, this issue). He has been on hunger strike since Thursday 11 November 1999, in protest at the refusal of the Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC) to refer his case back to the Court of Appeal. Ron is in very poor health and there is a strong possibility that he will die before the CCRC make their final decision.

Ron has written from prison about his reasons, "I have decided to go on to hunger strike as I can find no other way to protest about my treatment by the judiciary, the Home Office and the Prison Service. I was convicted of offences of armed robbery and wounding a police officer in 1988. The offence was set up by a police informant and my co-defendant was shot dead by the police. The whole incident was filmed live by Thames Television. I was denied legal representation at my trial. My defence was that I had fired on the police in self-defence as when they opened fire, I was aware that my life was in danger as a result of the police's policy of 'shoot-to-kill'. My defence team withdrew as they said that this was a political defence which they could not put forward. I was found guilty and given a life sentence even though there was no attempt by the trial judge to follow the normal procedures for imposing such a sentence. I tried to appeal the conviction and sentence and had to do this without legal representation. The Court of Appeal simply affirmed the trial judge's decision. After conviction, my prison file wrongly stated that I had murdered someone. I was told that I had a whole life tariff and was made a Category A prisoner.

During my time in prison I tried to protest my case. Although I did not resort to violence, I was faced by violence from prison staff. As a result of the continual abuses I faced, I undertook a lengthy hunger strike. Eventually, the Home Office agreed to reconsider my case. My 'tariff' or prison sentence was fixed at twelve-and-a-half years. Although I was pleased at this recognition of the earlier injustice, I was still angry that it was too long and that I should never have received the life sentence in the first place. I applied to the CCRC to have my case referred back to the Court of Appeal but they refused. They have taken the view that even though I never had legal

representation, that my case is listed in criminal textbooks as not following the normal law and the strong arguments I have that my sentence is illegal, that I have no grounds for even my sentence to be reconsidered. I have no further avenues to take in the legal process. I am not prepared to apply for parole as I do not recognise the legality of my sentence and I believe I should be released automatically from prison. I have therefore commenced a hunger strike as I can see no other option available to me."

⇢ *Please write to the: Criminal Cases Review Commission (CCRC), Alpha Tower, Suffolk Street, Queensway, Birmingham B1 1TT; or fax 0121 633 1823; mark letters for the attention of Ms Lee. Please make the point that Ron is elderly and in poor health, and urge the CCRC to make a prompt decision and refer his case back to the Court of Appeal without any further delay.*

Messages of support for Ron should be sent to: Ronald Easterbrook, HMP Highdown, Sutton Lane Sutton, Surrey SM2 5PD. Email messages of support will be forwarded: FreeRonEasterBrook@ncadc.demon.co.uk.

MARK BARNSLEY UPDATE

Mark Barnsley has been transferred from Full Sutton to Long Lartin prison in Worcestershire. This is a punishment move as Mark is seen as a 'difficult' prisoner due to his support for other prisoners and making complaints against the harassment he has received from Full Sutton prison officials. Mark is a Category B prisoner but is being treated as if he is Category A.

Mark's case has been submitted to the Criminal Cases Review Commission, but it is unlikely that it will be looked at for at least two years. In the meantime, 29 March is a day of action against the Criminal Prosecution Service (CPS) to demand that they hand over evidence to Mark and his solicitors.

⇢ *Telephone Sheffield CPS on 0114 2912000/ 2811911 /2298600, or the CPS headquarters on 020 7796 8000 or email to: complaints@cps.gov.uk and demand that they hand over all the relevant documents. Mark Barnsley WA2897, HMP Long Lartin, South Littleton, Evesham, Worcs WR11 5TZ Justice for Mark Barnsley c/o 145-149 Cardigan Road, Leeds LS6 1LJ. Or email at: barnsleycampaign@hotmail.com.*

AMELIA JOHNSON

Ali Khalid Abdullah of the Political Prisoners of War Coalition informs us of the case of Amelia Johnson, aka Bahiya Shakur, an Afrikan-American woman serving life in Texas. She allegedly kidnapped and murdered her husband, Darius Leon Powell. She was convicted on circumstantial evidence. The Court-appointed lawyer didn't interview any of the witnesses who could testify on her behalf. Other alleged witnesses were compromised by the District Attorney's office. Amelia believes that the DA knew she was not guilty but were desperate to obtain a conviction. The third prosecution witness was Amelia's son, who was accused of being involved in the crime and threatened with a life in jail unless he implicated his mother. Amelia advised him to blame her, if only to spare himself from a lifetime inside. As well as trumping up charges, the DA gave out negative press statements about Amelia, which the reporter involved later apologised for printing. Amelia is continuing to fight to clear her name, and would appreciate donations and letters:

⇢ *Attorney Myrtle J McDaniel, c/o Amelia Johnson Legal Defense, PO Box 2032, Temple, TX 76503 USA.*

Bahiya Shakur (Amelia Johnson # 640983), 1401 State School Rd, Gatesville TX 76503 USA.

J18 PRISONERS

The wheels of injustice grind slowly, and people are still being sent down as a result of J18 last year. As we went to press some cases from November 30 had already been thrown out and others were pending. Several of those jailed have already been released.

The prisoners below would appreciate letters – but please remember that letters to prisoners are opened and read by prison officers so don't write anything that could jeopardise anyone's freedom.

Sean Brown
(September 1999, sentenced to 12 months)
BP5610, HMYOI Ashfield, Sherwood Road Pucklechurch, Bristol BS16 9LY

Jeff Booker
(21/1/00, sentenced to 21 months)
DN7071, HMP Elmley, Eastchurch, Sheerness Kent ME12 4OZ

Stuart Tokam
(21/1/00, sentenced to 12 months)
DN7072, HMP Standford Hill, Church Road East Church, Sheerness, Kent ME12 4AA

Thomas Wall
(4/2/00, sentenced to 18 months)
FF4431, HMP Belmarsh, Western Way Thamesmead, London SE28 OEB

Kuldip Bajwa
(7/2/00, sentenced to 21 months)
DN7230, HMP Highpoint, Stradishall Newmarket, Suffolk CB8 9YG

Jon Barnett
(11/2/00, sentenced to 6 months)
FB5538, HMYOI Feltham, Bedfont Road Feltham, Middlesex TW13 4ND

Neill Chapman
(18/2/00, sentenced to 6 months)
FF4529, HMP Belmarsh, Western Way Thamesmead, London SE28 OEB

Maggie Docherty
(17/3/00 sentenced to 6 months)
EH7352, HMP Holloway, Parkhurst Road London N7 ONU

Evolution and Environment

Peter Kropotkin ⋮ Black Rose Books ⋮ £11.99

This work, volume eleven of *The Collected Works of Peter Kropotkin*, is in two parts. The first is *Modern Science & Anarchism*. The second part, *Thoughts on Evolution*, is concerned with the latest theories and experiments in biology and evolutionary thought. As will become clear, the combining of these two very different works is not as contradictory as it first seems.

Modern Science & Anarchism is Kropotkin's attempt to place anarchist theory in the context of nineteenth century scientific thought. In so doing, he stresses the importance of the inductive-deductive method, namely the analysis of everyday society and the basing of theory on the results of that analysis rather than creating a theory in abstraction and fitting the facts to it. This methodology is particularly fruitful when used to analyse anarchism as a product of the class war ("Anarchism... originated in everyday struggles"). Kropotkin stresses that anarchism is not a utopian theory but rather a product of the needs and aspirations of working class people, as expressed in their resistance to authority, exploitation and domination. In Kropotkin's eyes, all that anarchist writers did was to "work out a general expression of [anarchism's] principles, and the theoretical and scientific basis of its teachings" derived from the experiences of working class people in struggle as well as analysing the evolutionary tendencies of society in general.

This vision of anarchism as a product of working class struggle and its organisations can be seen from Kropotkin's comments that "the Anarchist movement was renewed each time it received an impression from some great practical lesson: it derived its origin from the teachings of life itself." He pointed to the experience of the Paris Commune and the trade union movement, "the idea of independent Communes for the territorial organisation, and of federations of Trade Unions for the organisation of men [and women] in accordance with their different functions, gave a concrete conception of society regenerated by social revolution." So, for Kropotkin, the present and the future are linked by the struggle against capitalism (and the state) and the organisations and solidarity created by that struggle. Kropotkin saw the free society as a free federation of self-managing communes in which "associations of men and women... work on the land, in the factories, in the mines, and so on, [and are] themselves the managers of production."

Such a perspective is as essential now as it was then and this is why *Modern Science & Anarchism* should be read by all anarchists. It gives an essential base from which to develop and build anarchist theory in the future. Also of interest is the way Kropotkin links revolutions in science with social movements and transformations. This is important, for as any student realises, education does not exist in a vacuum. What is taught in schools, colleges and universities will be influenced by social struggles going on outside. If social struggle is low, radical ideas (in all areas of science, not only the social sciences) may be safely ignored. However, when social struggle heats up, new ideas appear and enter all aspects of society, including education and science. People develop new ideas and rebel against the authority of what passes for science as well as against the authority of the state or the boss. Thus, as well as linking anarchism to the daily struggles of the oppressed, he links this struggle to the evolution of ideas, of science. This is to be expected as the ideal, as Bakunin argued, is the flower whose root lies in the material conditions of existence. The very process of struggle, the changing of those material conditions, will necessarily find expression in the world of science and thought. And it is this challenge to existing scientific authority which is expressed in the second half of the book.

RAPID ADAPTATIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT

This second half contains articles on evolution previously unpublished in book form. They date from 1910 to 1915, and discuss the effects of the environment on planet and animal evolution and its relationship to previous theories on evolution, particularly those of Darwin. The articles are relevant to anarchists as they suggest that if animals and plants adapt quickly to changing environments, the same applies to humans. It is these rapid adaptations to the environment which Kropotkin discusses, along with their influence on long-term evolutionary change. The research implies that rather than a fixed and definite 'human nature' people (like other animals) can adapt and evolve quickly to different environmental circumstances. Thus an anarchist society is neither utopian nor incompatible with 'human nature' as human nature will change in response to new stimuli (the "direct action of the environment"). This complements Kropotkin's ideas on the nature of anarchism as a product of struggle. By resisting power, people create new forms of social organisation and modify their environment. This new environment encourages adaptations in those who experience it, thus a process of accumulated changes occurs in a specific direction provoked by the direct action of the (changing) environment on individuals.

One question remains, however. If animals and plants adapt to changing environments then will humans adapt to hierarchical society? If this is the case, then the spirit of revolt can only occur from external influences, not from any need for liberty, equality or solidarity. It also implies that alienation cannot exist, as there is nothing to be alienated from. This can be inferred from Kropotkin's comments that "Anarchism is a conception of the Universe based on the mechanical interpretation of phenomena." This vision is lacking in that it ignores the fact that people have always striven for freedom no matter how terrible the environment in which they live. While people do adapt to their environment, they also try and change that environment to better satisfy their needs, needs which exist in spite of their environment.

Hence Kropotkin's vision must be informed by Malatesta, who argued against Kropotkin's fatalism and mechanistic tendencies and reminded us that anarchy "is a human aspiration" and "can be achieved through the exercise of the human will." This subjective element in the struggle for freedom is essential and one Kropotkin recognises in *Modern Science & Anarchism* when he writes that "Anarchy represents... the creative constructive force of the masses, who elaborated common-law institutions in order to defend themselves against a domineering minority." In other words, anarchism comes from the resistance of those who do not adapt to hierarchical society and act to change it to one more fitting their needs and desires. Kropotkin was obviously aware of this but, unfortunately, did not see how it contradicted his mechanistic philosophy.

This minor point aside, these works are of use to anarchists today. Rather than produce a 'science' of the class struggle – Kropotkin applies the techniques of science to that struggle in order to ground anarchism in the struggle of the oppressed and to show it was a product of our own self-activity. This methodology is one anarchists should continue to apply while ignoring the mechanistic comments of Kropotkin. Despite its flaws, this book (especially *Modern Science & Anarchism*) is essential reading for anyone interesting in both analysing and changing the world. ■

The Last Flight of the Ornithocheirus

Walking With Dinosaurs BBC TV, October 1999

I wouldn't normally review a television programme, and I don't actually watch that much TV... it was obviously fake, a lot was guessed at and almost all the animals featured died out so long ago that it is hard for humans to even conceive of such time. So why am I moved to write about this one? Firstly, because humans need to ditch some of their arrogance about their place in the world. It is entirely a fluke, and the story of the dinosaurs illustrates this. Secondly, it shows us something about science, which all too often is perceived as an absolute, rather than a method of making assumptions and testing them. Thirdly, it's about time we stopped referring to conservative or reactionary political opponents as dinosaurs – it's a disservice to the beasts. Finally, it touched my sense of wonder at life itself, and the beauty of forms that adapt themselves to survival in different environments.

On the technical side, most of the re-created creatures were well done. The skin colours and other features were inferred, of course, but generally done in the context of debates about dinosaur behaviour, and observation of species in similar ecological niches today. Some failed to convince – for example the didelphodon nest raiders in the final episode, and some of the feeding sequences didn't quite gel, but overall, most had a 'jizz' as birders would say, that felt unique. The programmes proceeded as if they were normal natural history documentaries, of the sort that the BBC actually does well. The bombastic narration from Kenneth Branagh was a bit too much – all the pomp of Attenborough without the enthusiasm. Why don't they ever use someone with an accent from somewhere, instead of all this BBC English? The series was also interestingly split up – showing different periods in natural history and different places. Far too many films and books mix everything up, which is why you would never really see a stegosaurus fight a tyrannosaurus rex. I suspect that some of the very interesting recent feathered dinosaur discoveries from China came too late for the film makers – they might otherwise have added feathers to the baby tyrannosaurs in the final episode. What the series aimed to do was to put the dinosaurs in their context, which it certainly succeeded in.

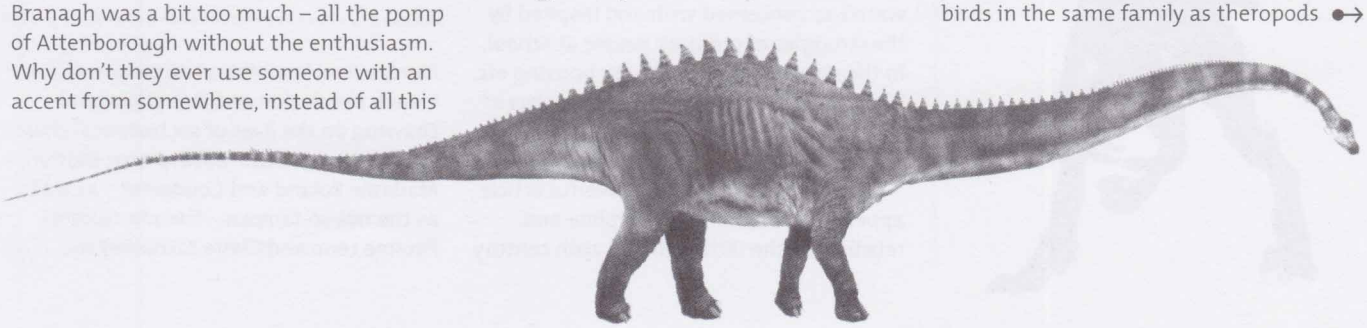
So why is this at all relevant to a political mag? Well, the popular idea about dinosaurs when I was growing up (and interested in them, which I suspect almost all kids go through) was that they were supplanted by mammals which were somehow 'better' than these slow, lumbering, cold-blooded reptiles. This is all now known to be false – dinosaurs were warm blooded and filled most of the large animal ecological niches filled by mammals today. Feathers probably evolved from reptilian scales as a means of keeping warm, only later becoming adapted for flight. Their distant relatives, the pterosaurs, filled most of those that are today occupied by birds. As a family of animals, dinosaurs probably reshaped the planet more than any others since blue-green algae started poisoning the atmosphere with oxygen, at least until humans came on the scene. Their habits and behaviour were probably responsible for what Darwin called the "abominable mystery" of the origin of flowers. Oh, and they didn't all die out. In South America until it was joined to North America and on several island groups to this day, their descendants, the birds, successfully kept at bay the supposedly more advanced mammals for millions of years.

dinosaurs shouldn't be used as a metaphor for reactionaries... by a similar line of argument I object to those highly intelligent quadrupeds, pigs, being compared to policemen

These creatures evolved, and dominated all those large animal niches, for one hundred and fifty five million years. In contrast, relatively intelligent apes have been around for four million, and our own species is only a few hundred thousand. Started feeling smaller? [1]

But this is also a story of science. The same popular myth that says that mouse-sized mammals wiped out dinosaurs by eating their eggs also believes science sets things in stone. It doesn't, and the story of the dinosaurs illustrates that very well. Science isn't an either or equation – it is, as Stephen Jay Gould notes, "rooted in creative interpretation... [scientists] believe in their own objectivity, and fail to discern the prejudice that leads them to one interpretation among many consistent with their [data]." [2]

Dinosaurs were originally called antediluvian monsters because they were supposedly all killed in the 'Great Flood'. The plethora of fossil-hunting parsons and men of letters in the nineteenth century led to them being re-assessed as ancient reptiles. The theory of evolution by natural selection published by Darwin in 1859 began the slow process of restoring these collections of ancient bones to their proper place in natural history. While backward American states still insist on banning the teaching of evolution (is that why they have to import scientists from more rational countries?) it is now widely accepted, if misunderstood. The last twenty years have put feathers on dinosaurs and birds in the same family as theropods ↔



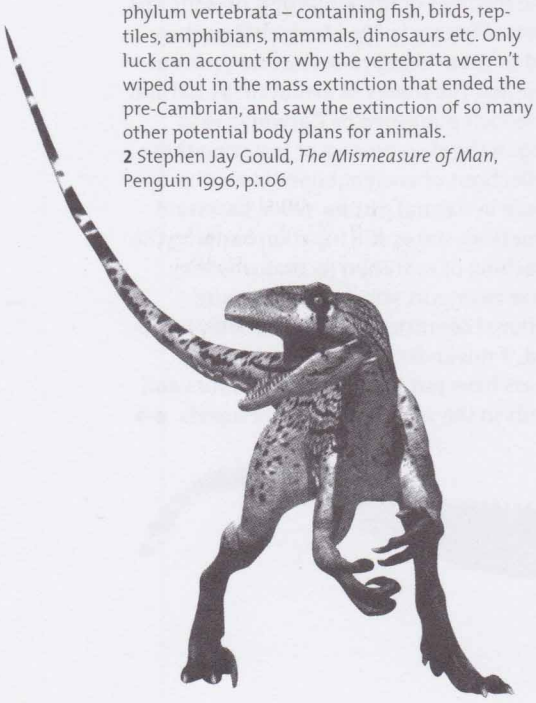
←● (dinosaurs like the velociraptors from Jurassic Park). Discoveries have been made that show some dinosaurs cared for their young, and basically did many of the things we today associate with mammals and birds. So, is the picture of the dinosaurs from the BBC accurate? Well, it's a good guess, but it's as accurate as current research will allow, probably less so as so much of it is necessarily conjecture – the fossil record leaves no absolute clues about mating behaviour for example.

I've probably said enough now about why I think dinosaurs shouldn't be used as a metaphor for reactionaries unwilling to change. By a similar line of argument I object to those highly intelligent quadrupeds, pigs, being compared to policemen. But I should really leave this review with the sense of awe and wonder I felt at seeing these creatures brought to life. The dolphin like opthalmosaurus chasing bony fish through turquoise waters. The newly revised diplodocus grazing the ground (not the treetops). The sociable leaellynasaura coping with the Antarctic winter. But what sticks with me most is the flight of the ornithocheirus, an albatross-like pterosaur with a wingspan up to twelve metres, gliding across the infant Atlantic to its final resting place. And how can anyone fight for the planet we live on without a sense of wonder? ■

Notes

1 How small and how lucky can be seen from the Burgess shale fossils, a remarkable collection of soft-bodied animals preserved in British Columbia, which represent the Pre-Cambrian explosion of multi-cellular life after its bacterial origins. All of the phyla currently alive are represented among the fossils. An uncommon fossil is that of Pikaia, the representative of the ancestors of the phylum vertebrata – containing fish, birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, dinosaurs etc. Only luck can account for why the vertebrata weren't wiped out in the mass extinction that ended the pre-Cambrian, and saw the extinction of so many other potential body plans for animals.

2 Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man*, Penguin 1996, p.106



more reviews

All Power to the Imagination
Dave Douglass | Class War | £5.00

In this book, Douglass provides a stirring defence of trade unions as "marking the pages of (a worker's) personal and class history, the conditions of his current working life against that of his father and grandfather – the terms that govern his hours of labour, his wages, the age of his marras, even their sex, is established in epochs of union struggle, class struggle remembered and learned." This book is also, in part, a reply to articles by Cajo Brendel and Theo Sander, and attacks in Wildcat denouncing Dave Douglass as an 'Anarcho-Stalinist' and a union bureaucrat for serving as elected NUM branch delegate for Hatfield Colliery. Much of the book is taken up with his response.

His argument is simple enough; "Trade unions, in the terms they look at them, are basically inanimate objects and therefore cannot make a revolution. It is the working class, as a class, which is revolutionary, and who will make the revolution. What I argue is that workers can utilise their own class instruments to do this." He makes an analogy with a bus, – an inanimate object, but one which could be "set on fire to stop blacklegs or the fascists." Unions, like buses, can be transformed into revolutionary instruments for which they weren't designed.

As someone who's been a member of UCATT and the TGWU I can go some of the way with this; certainly on a local level. A branch can be way to the left and considerably more militant than the union bureaucracy could ever conceive, but beyond that the 'bus' analogy only works if you concede that you'd need to overpower the driver and the conductor first. Dave is right though, to argue that, "The union is seen by workers as an instrument in their fight for social survival. It is both absurd and reactionary to petulantly stand, face to the wall, saying "I'm agin the unions" in some purer-than-thou stance, while millions upon millions of workers utilise them as front-line weapons in the class war." I'd be more worried about the line he takes, if he wasn't so concerned with and inspired by the struggles of ordinary people at school, in the street, over race, gender, housing etc. Douglass sees trade unions as an arena of class struggle, part of working class life to be fought over.

There is a detailed and powerful article appendixed detailing indiscipline and rebellion in the 18th, 19th and 20th century coalfields which is worth a fiver on its own. There's also a wonderful bit where he reflects on the 60s, on young miners being inspired by the Panthers ("we thought of them as... our party in America, they were the people on the ground fighting an aspect of the war which was inextricably linked to our own"), the Provos "emerging kicking and shooting out of the republican ghettos, of occupied Ulster", and "rocking the night away and shagging all over the place." *All Power to the Imagination* is a genuinely inspirational read. As I agree with just about everything he says in it, it's easy for me to say that – a lot of people won't; they should read it anyway, simply because it's a pleasure to read something written with so much passion and verve and genuine belief in our capacity as a class to change the world.

The World is Not Enough
United International Pictures | Cert. 12

Why even mention the new James Bond movie in *Black Flag*? Well, for starters, Robert Carlyle plays the main thug, a terrorist labelled an 'anarchist' by MI6. Needless to say, the usual lies about anarchists are spread – this 'anarchist' is said to believe in "nothing" and aims at "chaos" (according to MI6, the villain does not say anything about his politics, or lack of them, bar saying that Bond is "preserving Capital" while he is helping his girlfriend monopolise oil production!) Now with the end of Stalinism, will we anarchists (suitably misrepresented as believers in chaos) become the major villains to defend the 'free world' against? After Seattle, probably.

What about the film? It is a bit disjointed and the set pieces impressive but, like the rest of the film, cold (saying that the friends I saw it with and my work mates rated it higher than me). The last one was far better and Pierce Brosnan is no Sean Connery (although far better than Moore).

City of Darkness, City of Light
Marge Piercy | Penguin | £6.99

Piercy's novel paints a vivid picture of the French Revolution and its background. Drawing on the lives of six historical characters (the famous – Robespierre, Danton, Madame Roland and Condorcet – as well as the not-so-famous – the san culottes Pauline Leon and Claire Lacombe) she

letters

combines the personal and the political to show the nature of the people's revolution and its ultimate defeat by the rich and the instrument created to protect it, the new Republican state.

Piercy, as readers of her excellent science fiction novels *Woman on the Edge of Time* and *Body of Glass*, will know, is a feminist writer with a strong libertarian theme to her politics and writing. This libertarian theme is also at the fore in *City of Darkness, City of Light*. The liberating nature and effectiveness of direct action as a means of social change is brought home by the development of the two female san culottes. Thus the revolutionary transformation of individuals and social relationships is stressed along with the revolutionising of the wider society. Similarly, the progression of the revolution from its moderate original aims towards a social revolution is also vibrantly portrayed, with the very process of direct action producing wider, more radical demands and changes both in society and in individuals.

Twenty Year Millennium Wildcat
Donald Rooum | Freedom Press | £1.95

Donald Rooum is Freedom Press' long-established cartoonist. Freedom publishes reprints of anarchist classics and a paper that hardly anyone reads. They also regularly attack the memory of Albert Meltzer, one of *Black Flag*'s founders, of whom they are evidently jealous.

Rooum's latest collection contains a caricature of Albert as a rat, with the 'youthful activist' character Wildcat taking the side of the Egghead (symbolising Rooum, or perhaps FP more generally). Readers taken in by this rubbish might wonder where all the youthful activists who took Freedom's side are? So do I. Freedom Press might not like being called liars, liberals and quietists, but it doesn't stop it being true.

Dear Black Flag

Once again, that hoary old chestnut of £10 and a packed-lunch for the Rent-a-Mob was trotted out by the Right – both conservative and labour – in the wake of J18. A quick glance at the history of the Mob – in London, at any rate – would suggest that in the glory days of King Mob the forces of Government and oppression were by far the most adept at manipulating the Mob. 'Lord' George Gordon in London; mill-owners in the industrial cities in the North; and Tory JPs and clerics in the country-side were all responsible for 'licensing' the actions of the crowd. I am not a clever man, but tell me why does the Right seem to know so much about the renting of mobs to terrorise? Might it have something to do with the practice, which they have continued into this century, to lead those they disenfranchise (through unemployment, alienation, etc.), by means of odious shits such as Mosley, into a position of disrepute over which they exercise control?

On a not-wholly-unrelated note, and demonstrating that direct action can be undertaken without being an agent of the state, EP Thompson pushes back the waving of the Red & the Black to 1780 when "James Jackson, a watch-wheelcutter, who rode a carthorse and waved a red and black flag..." was a figurehead during the Gordon Riots (see Thompson, *Making of the English Working Class*, p78, Penguin 1968) – the long history has yet to be written.
No Pasaran! Thanks for a great magazine,
All the best, Gwyl

Dear BF

Your anonymous writer faults me for observing in *Anarchy after Leftism* that "the Italian syndicalists mostly went over to Fascism", referencing David D Roberts', *The Syndicalist Tradition and Italian Fascism*. As proof, he quotes Roberts as writing that "the vast majority of the organised workers failed to respond to the syndicalists' appeals and continued to oppose intervention" in the First World War. Obviously this statement does not contradict mine. It is about war, not fascism. The war was over before the fascist movement began. And it is about the "organised workers", not about the members of the USI, which had only 100,000 members in 1914, and lost some of them when the interventionists split.

Contrary to Comrade Anonymous, the split was not between a cabal of intellectuals and 'leaders' – in quotation marks, as if to imply that they were not what they really were, the syndicalist leaders – and the rank and file. True eggheads and officials split, but they were not alone: "The split was complex, penetrating to the rank and file level and even dividing individual unions, but the result was a further loss in working class support for the syndicalists." (Roberts, p.113). You may not like what Roberts has to say, but I didn't misrepresent his position. Denounce him, not me.

Even if Comrade A were right, what does this fiasco say about syndicalism? Syndies assure us that their cumbersome hierarchies of bottom-up organising and accountability to the base are both the means to and the forms of a free society. Yet the Italian leaders and thinkers were almost all for a war which, the Comrade implies, almost all the rank and file were against. Syndical organisation is thus a self-refuting failure.

Comrade A also asserts "that these 'leading syndicalists'" – he ignores the follower syndicalists – "were not anarchists and so not anarcho-syndicalists." When did I ever say they were? But this is quite a change in the *Black Flag* party line. Two years ago you opined, "In reality there is not such thing as just 'syndicalism' and anarcho-syndicalism and revolutionary syndicalism are the same thing" (*What is Anarcho-Syndicalism?* Spring 1997). If this is so, then no doubt remains that the "Italian syndicalists mostly went over to fascism."

The article is almost entirely an exercise in irrelevance. I was not referring to the official positions taken by one small organisation in 1915 or 1919, but rather to the ultimate political trajectory of those Italians who had once considered themselves syndicalists. A modest but militant minority did put up a fight against fascism so long as that was possible. But many accommodated themselves to the fascist version of the corporatism espoused by all syndicalists. There was more to it than opportunism: syndicalism and nationalism (and then fascism) had been converging since before the war.

Roberts makes this clear, but consider another opinion from another historian, A. James Gregor, *Italian Fascism and Developmental Dictatorship*, p. 108: "Thus, by 1919, Italian nationalism and revolutionary syndicalism shared substantial similarities" such as "their doctrinal emphases on mass mobilisation, mimetic example, elite rule, mythic suasion, and collective development and modernisation... To these ends, both nationalism and revolutionary national syndicalism advocated an ethic of discipline, sacrifice and labour for a nation still caught up in the psychology of underdevelopment." In other words, fascists ●→

←● shared with syndicalists then what they share with syndicalists – including anarcho-syndicalists – to this day: a dedication to work and workerism, productivism, industrialism, and sacrificial moralism. We post-leftist anarchists reject this heritage.
Yours in slack, Bob Black

Comrade A Replies

Is Comrade B is taking the piss? He claims "it is about war, not fascism" and so his comments concerning the "syndicalists" are correct. Given that the pro-war syndicalists were the ones to become National Syndicalists and fascists, his point is lost on me. Surely if the majority of syndicalists (ie. members of the USI) in Italy had gone over to fascism (and its 'National Syndicalism') then they would have supported the Nation in World War One? In fact the majority of USI members rejected the arguments of those syndicalists who were later to become fascists in 1914 – Comrade B's argument simply does not hold water. If, as he says, "syndicalism and nationalism (and then fascism) had been converging before the war" then the majority of USI members were not aware of this when they voted for an anti-war position (and so anti-nationalist) at the start of the First World War. Nor were the fascists when they attacked the USI after the war.

The article did indicate that most USI members rejected the pro-war syndicalists – "the majority did not even follow" the syndicalist "leaders" in supporting the war. Comrade B wonders "what does this fiasco say about syndicalism"? I have to wonder what planet Comrade B is on. The organisation voted in its national congress an anti-war position and the pro-war minority left. Rather than being a "self-refuting failure" this example shows Comrade B's arguments to be self-refuting – and that he cannot get basic facts right.

Moving on, Comrade B takes issue with the suggestion that he implied that syndicalists he mentions were anarchists. Here he *is* taking the piss. After all, his comments are in a book about anarchism and the failings of 'Leftist' anarchy. Is it not safe to assume that he was discussing the failings of anarchists rather than 'Leftists' (ie. Marxists)? Perhaps I am wrong, perhaps in order to refute Anarcho-syndicalists you must discuss the failures of Marxist-syndicalists? What next, a refutation of communist anarchism by discussing the failures of Leninism?

Comrade B states that a "modest but militant minority did put up a fight against fascism". In fact, the USI (which had grown from the 70,000 left after the pro-war factions left to nearly 1 million members) was the majority syndicalist organisation in the country (the pro-war, National Syndicalist Union UIL was a fraction of its size). It was USI members who took part in the Arditi Del Popolo. It was the USI which took part in the general strike against fascism. It was the USI which was crushed by fascist gangs. And Comrade B still claims that the "Italian syndicalists mostly went over to fascism". Amazing.

He quotes another academic that by 1919 "Italian nationalism and revolutionary syndicalism shared substantial similarities". Yes, but only if you look at the pro-war syndicalists who had left the USI years before (hence Gregor's reference to national syndicalists)! What did the USI stand for by 1919? It had taken an anti-war position, supported the class struggle and taken a leading role in the strikes and occupations of the post-war period. For this the USI was attacked and crushed by the fascists. So much for "similarities" between the USI (ie. revolutionary syndicalism) and Italian Nationalism (and so fascism).

Comrade B ends with a diatribe against 'syndicalism' (including anarcho-syndicalism) and what they apparently believe in. I do not (and none of the anarcho-syndicalists I have met) subscribe to his list. Perhaps Comrade B confuses a desire to see the end of wage-labour by self-management with a glorification of work? If so, then that is his business. Personally I agree with Kropotkin on the necessity of attractive 'work' (ie. productive activity) and reducing the hours we have to do this to a minimum. Every anarcho-syndicalist I have met shares this vision of work transformed into attractive, productive activity and minimised – and the first step towards this is occupying the workplace and placing it under self-management (where appropriate, of course, many workplaces should be turned into something more useful). I get the impression that Comrade B thinks that nobody reads his works, otherwise he would not suggest other anarchists glorify work and not be aware of the importance of his arguments in *The Abolition of Work*. It is a shame he underestimates his influence in our movement so.

WANTED

Illustrators, Cartoonists, Artists and Photographers for future issues of *Black Flag*. Got any good pictures of recent events or actions? See your work in print and support the cause! (Thanks: Brian Bolland, Bob Fingerman)

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OBITUARY

Peter Miller
5 April 1943 – 9 October 1999

Veteran anarchist, secularist, trade unionist and horse-racing enthusiast, Peter Miller died in Leicester following a brave fight against cancer.

Active in the secularist movement since 1961, and a Trustee and Secretary of the Leicester Secular Society for over ten years, Pete was well-known as an untiring supporter of the ABC. He was also active in the trade union movement, and was a branch officer of Leicester Unison for many years.

Originally a member of the Trotskyist Socialist Labour League of Gerry Healey in the days when male comrades were instructed to ignore the long-haired rebellion of working class youth and affect a 'proletarian' short back and sides, Pete moved to Anarchism (and long hair) in the mid-1960s. His long association with the ABC was the result of meeting Albert Meltzer: "I met him by chance in the 1960s and sent him a note to thank him for a kindness offered during our first passing contact. He replied and from that casual exchange of politeness has grown a correspondence lasting nearly thirty years". Pete's dedication to long-term correspondences helped sustain many class struggle prisoners in Britain and abroad with whom he was in regular touch over those years. His letters invariably brought a good dose of wit, common sense, good humour and intelligence into otherwise drab and cheerless surroundings. Such down-to-earth solidarity was highly valued.

As well as his work on behalf of prisoners, Pete was a regular contributor to the anarchist press for over thirty years and was the editor and publisher of the idiosyncratic anarchist cultural magazine *Z Review*.

Pete's passion for horse-racing baffled many comrades, though providing an excellent excuse to travel outside Leicester and renew old acquaintances. But undoubtedly, Pete's greatest love was his family: his wife Jean and three children, Jen, Alex and Tim. A kindly, tolerant, always dependable and completely genuine person, Peter will be sadly missed by all who knew him. *Phillip Ruff*

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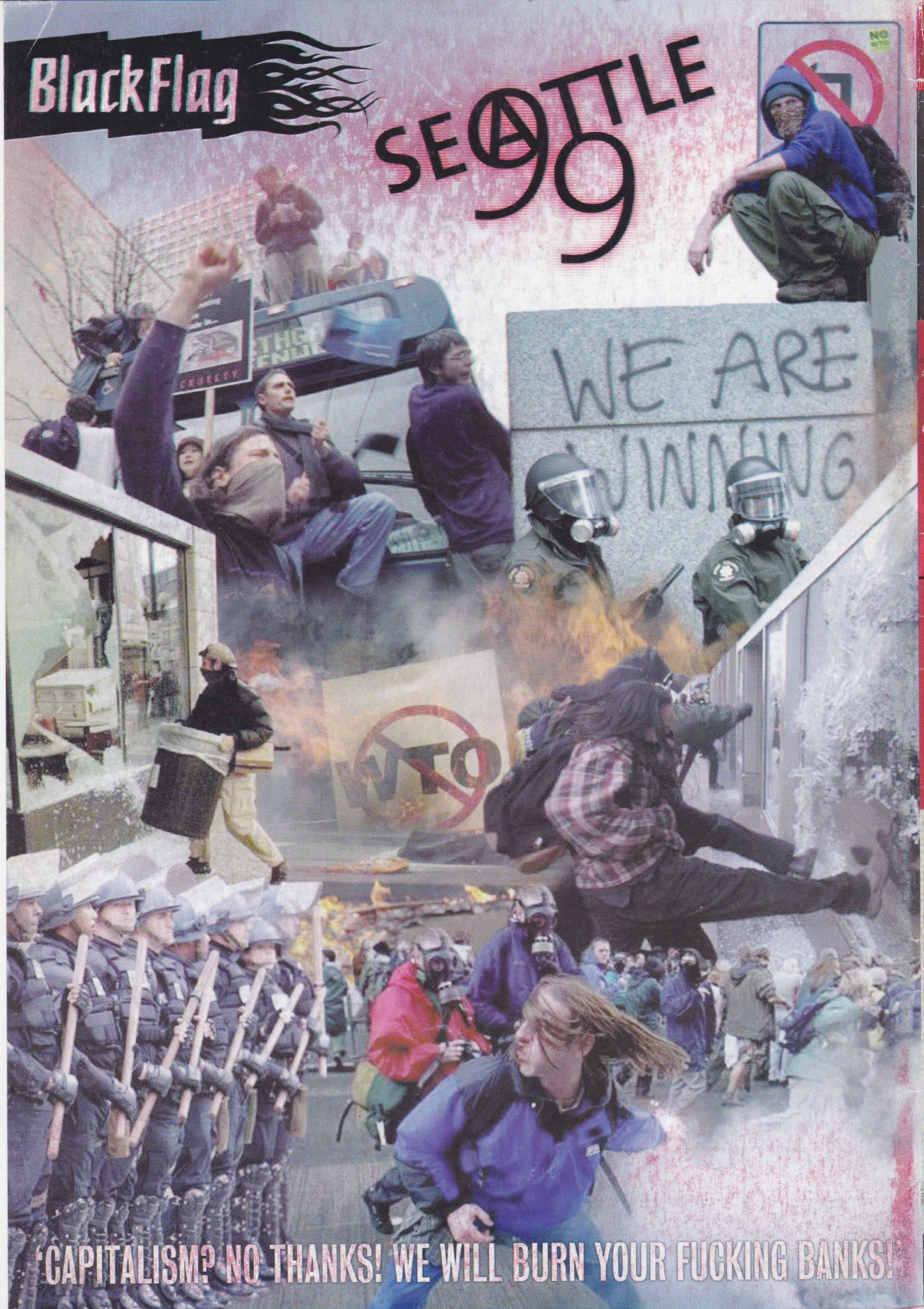
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